

MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN TRANSITION

**The Nordic Association for
Research on Men and Masculinities Conference
June 11-13 2025
Stockholm University, Sweden**

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

The conference is hosted by the Department of Child and Youth Studies and the Gender Academy at Stockholm University, in collaboration with the Nordic Association for Research on Men and Masculinities. It is financially supported by a grant from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

The organizing committee has consisted of: Henning Årman, Cecilia Åse, Kalle Berggren, Anna Cavallin, Lucas Gottzén and Susan Lindholm, Stockholm University.

KEYNOTES

Plenary I: Masculinity studies in transition

Chair: Kalle Berggren

Failures of affect: Representing masculine energies

Todd W. Reeser, University of Pittsburgh

Mark Zuckerberg recently proclaimed that corporate culture needs more ‘masculine energy’. While masculine affect can definitely be a tool of gender normativity or hegemony, cultural representations of masculine affect can also call attention to ways in which it can and does fail, not performing or reifying normativity at all. Such failures can gesture toward new relational forms of masculinity. Marrying affect studies and CSMM, this talk offers a methodology for considering failures of masculine energies or affects as resistant to normativity. Case studies will be drawn from a variety of cultural forms and contexts, including literature, film, and dance.

Todd Reeser is Professor of French and Gender, Sexuality, & Women’s Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, USA. He has published widely on masculinity, including the monographs *Setting Plato Straight Translating Ancient Sexuality in the Renaissance* (2015), *Queer Cinema in Contemporary France* (2022), and *Masculinities in Theory* (2nd ed., 2023).

Do we need to exit MAN in the posthuman predicament?

Ulf Mellström, Karlstad University

In these troubled times of patriarchal revenge and masculinist political revival that we currently are witnessing, how can we resist on an ontological level as well as an epistemological ditto? Do we need to exit MAN in its present form altogether? As we are progressing into new waves of theoretical landscapes in studies of men and masculinities, I believe it is fundamental to revisit the ever-present connection to feminist theorizing and need to return to some of the ground pillars of masculinity studies such as the ‘Man question’. This implies an ontological politics and epistemological practices that take a point of departure in entanglements, intimacies, and

dependencies upon nature, culture and materiality, and not least relational ontologies, as well as engage closer with feminist theorising and practice in posthumanisms, theories of affect and new materialisms.

Ulf Mellström is Professor of Gender Studies at Karlstad University, Sweden. He is the founder of *NORMA: International Journal of Masculinity Studies* and served as editor-in-chief between 2006 and 2023. Recent key publications include *Posthumanism and the ‘Man’ Question: Beyond Anthropocentric Masculinities* (2023, ed. w. Pease) and the *Routledge International Handbook of Masculinity Studies* (2020, ed. w. Gottzén & Shefer).

Plenary II: Climate change and green transitions

Chair: Anna Cavallin

Survival: Transitioning masculinities on a warming planet

Martin Hultman (Chalmers University of Technology)

In which ways are masculinities interwoven with energy, climate change and biodiversity? Such question has been in centre of my scholarship for the last two decades, today increasingly in dialogue with more and more colleagues in our field. This lecture will give the ecological-, and material feminist historical background for these analyses, display an analytical framework including the configurations of industrial/ breadwinner-, ecomodern- and ecological masculinities as well as showcasing a number of new advanced studies that deals with how masculinities are part of our ongoing planetary emergency at the end of (M)anthropocene.

Associate Professor Martin Hultman, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden, is widely published in energy, climate, environmental issues and masculinity in a variety of journals and more than ten books. Recent work includes the introduction to the special issue ‘Gender and climate catastrophe’ (in *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*, w. Mehrabi & Uldbjer) and ‘Dead white men vs.

Greta Thunberg: Nationalism, misogyny, and climate change denial in Swedish far-right digital media' in *Australian Feminist Studies* (w. Vowles).

Food and the eco-gender gap: Men, masculinities and sustainable food

Jonatan Leer (Örebro University)

This talk explores the question of why men are less invested in the green transition, the so-called eco-gender gap, particularly in relation to food. The talk argues that there seems to be two major ways of framing and handling the problem of the eco-gender gap in the research, policies, and activism: gender pragmatic framing and a gender critical framing. The talk critically discusses the two perspectives and argues that we need to find ways to continue to critically address gender and sustainability in ways that leave spaces for a certain heterogeneity.

Jonatan Leer is Professor of Culinary Arts & Meal Science at Örebro University, Sweden, and specialized in food culture. He has published widely on food and gender in relation to education, professional cooking, media and food porn. Recent books include *Research Methods in Digital Food Studies* (2021, w. Krogager) and *Food and Media: Practices, Distinctions and Heterotopias* (2016, ed. w. Povlsen). He is currently co-investigator of the research project 'Masculinities in Green Transition'.

Plenary III: Young men and masculinities in transition

Chair: Lucas Gottzén

Masculinities in transition: For good, for bad, both or neither?

Steven Roberts (Monash University)

This talk explores the shifting landscape of masculinities in response to recent social, cultural, and political change. Situated in a context of growing polarization in gendered political orientations between young men and young women, he will discuss different projects undertaken with various colleagues over the last 8 years, including studies on i) the development of positive and/or caring masculinities among young men and ii) the growing grip of the manosphere and its

implications for the safety of women, girls and gender diverse folks. These divergent masculinities are seemingly incongruous but emerge from the 'double movement' (to awkwardly borrow from Polanyi) of competing forces that seek to ameliorate or prop up patriarchy. The talk will also suggest the need for a hopeful imaginary in the field of CSMM, and close with an argument about why boys and men from the margins should be understood as having scope to be part of possible productive change, and believed when they say that's what they want.

Steven Roberts is Professor of Education & Social Justice at Monash University, Australia. He is an internationally recognised expert in research in changes and continuities in boys and men's masculinity practices, and inequalities in young people's transitions to adulthood. He is the author of *Young Working-Class Men in Transition* (2018) and *Gender, Masculinity and Video Gaming: Analysing Reddit's r/gaming Community* (2019, w. Maloney & Graham).

Trolling the Swedish countryside: On young masculinities and political (in)correctness

Susanna Areschoug (Stockholm University)

This talk examines the political subjectivities of young men, aiming to complicate conventional associations between masculine identities and ideological beliefs. By analysing the use of racist humour and offline 'trolling' practices, it explores how young men navigate political (in)correctness in different contexts. She examines how the strategies used to 'troll' adults and others vary depending on class position, highlighting the role of social background in shaping political performances. Theorizing how moral and political positions are connected to what Butler has termed the binary 'matrix of intelligibility', it is shown how young men's political subjectivities are negotiated as part of the work required to achieve status and recognition.

Susanna Areschoug is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm University, Sweden. Using qualitative, ethnographic methods, her research has focused on youth culture, identity, rurality, sexuality and racism. She takes intersectional perspectives with a particular focus on young men and masculinity, and political and cultural identifications. She is editor of the forthcoming special issue 'Young

masculinities and political subjectivity in and beyond the manosphere' for *YOUNG* (w. Gottzén).

Plenary IV: Changes in militarization and insecurity

Chair: Cecilia Åse

Militarization, masculinity, and Russia's war against Ukraine

Valerie Sperling (Clark University)

Masculinity, militarization and political leadership have been entwined in Russia during Vladimir Putin's quarter-century in power, both in domestic and foreign policy. This keynote talk will focus on militarized masculinity and femininity in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine, examining (among other things): ads for military service in Russia; the militarization of Putin's image; Putin's gendered and queerphobic comments in connection with the invasion; and the intersection of pronatalism, reproductive rights, and militarization during the war. It will include a discussion of Russia-based resistance to the war, and touch upon the advantages of thinking beyond masculinity, femininity, and the hierarchical gender binary.

Valerie Sperling is Professor of Political Science at Clark University. Her research interests lie at the intersection of Russian politics and gender studies. She is the author of *Sex, Politics, and Putin: Political Legitimacy in Russia* (2014) and *Trumping Politics as Usual: Masculinity, Misogyny, and the 2016 Elections* (2019, w. Boatright).

Critical anxieties: Reflections on responsible research in the evolving landscape

Maria Eriksson Baaz (Swedish Defence University & Uppsala University)

Putin's concept of militarized masculinity is far from unique, as recent events have painfully demonstrated. The seemingly rapid resurgence of overt celebrations of traditional military masculinities, especially in the US, calls for self-reflection, particularly among post-structuralist critical military scholars, like myself. Critical of previous diversity and inclusion initiatives, we devoted much attention to deconstructing

dominant understandings of military masculinities, ultimately portraying militarism as a less violent and urgent problem than suggested in mainstream feminist thought. This talk invites critical self-reflection. What are the stakes of post-structuralist CMS today? What politically and ethically responsible research agendas might emerge in this evolving landscape?

Maria Eriksson Baaz is Professor in War Studies at the Swedish Defence University and Professor in Political Science at Uppsala University, Sweden. Her research is situated within critical military studies and postcolonial studies, including the sociology and politics of violence, gender and militarization, the sociology of knowledge, qualitative research methodology and research ethics. She is the author of *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond* (2013, w. Stern).

PANELS

Panel 1: Masculinities and militarization in times of insecurity and war-preparedness

Chair: Cecilia Åse, Stockholm University

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 drastically altered the European security landscape. Several countries revised their security doctrines and dramatically increased military spending. These changes have had wide-ranging effects, not only on military organisations and civil security agencies, but also on social and political relations as well as individuals' lives.

Departing from feminist international relations (IR) thinking this panel aims to open scholarly conversations on masculinities and the ongoing processes of militarization. We conceptualise militarization as a multifaceted, gendered and gendering process centred on preparing societies for war and normalising the use of military violence. Militarization can encompass a wide array of social and political arenas, including education, the judiciary, media, civil society organisations, heritage and collective memory, tourism, entertainment and popular culture, art, sports, food, as well as arenas more directly associated with security and the military, such as political and military agencies, military recruitment and the weapons industry.

The panel will discuss issues such as: How have geopolitical anxieties and war-preparedness initiatives affected privileged masculinities and the notion of Nordic "gender exceptionalism"? In what ways do national identities and histories influence contemporary militarization? How are gendered and racialized imaginaries mobilised to legitimise rearmament and war-preparedness politics? How should we conceptualize the relationship between militarization and populism or strong man-politics?

1. Eating ourselves safe: Intersections of food, militarisms, and national security in Sweden

Luise Bendfeldt, Uppsala University (presenting) and Emily Clifford, University of London

This paper examines a recent advertising campaign launched by Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund, Sweden's agricultural association, which compels shoppers to buy Swedish produce 'for Sweden' - declaring it its best / tastiest defence. Drawing from an established tradition of feminist critical military scholars seeking knowledge of militarisms far from the battlefield, we use this campaign as a jumping off point to interrogate the ways in which militarisation functions in Swedish society. Curious about the role of everyday consumption within militarisation processes, we ask how associated narratives might (re)configure the Swedish family, what relations of power this enables / conceals, and for what purposes. Most importantly, we investigate how the campaign itself relies on and shapes gendered, raced and classed hierarchies, and how these contribute to, and make possible, Sweden's war preparedness efforts.

2. Becoming NATO brothers: A feminist comparison of how Finland and Sweden legitimized NATO membership 2022-2024

Astrid Brodén, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Leena Vastapuu, University of Turku and Swedish Defence University (both presenting), Emma Rosengren, Stockholm University and Minna Lyytikäinen, University of Helsinki

This article analyses how government officials in Finland and Sweden reconciled their national identities as historically non-aligned countries with NATO membership. The analysis builds on, and contributes to, feminist postcolonial theorizing on militarized nationalism. The analysis is based on statements by government officials in Finland and Sweden, following the submission of their NATO applications on 18 May 2022. Applying a comparative narrative design, the analysis identifies four narratives that, in different ways, (re)inforced gendered, racialized and classed tropes that naturalized Finland and Sweden's membership in NATO as a necessary means for (I) (re)conciling historical pasts, (II) defending the international rule-based order, (III) embracing a natural belonging to NATO, and (IV) becoming protectors of/from the North. Together, these narratives (re)instated militarized nationalisms in both countries. In

constructing notions of unity, they also silenced conflicting experiences of inequality and violence within and between NATO, the Nordics, and Finland and Sweden.

3. Preparedness as resilience? Feminist reflections on Finnish resilience narratives in times of militarization in the Nordics

Sina Krämer, Tampere University (presenting)
and Meeri Tiensuu, Tampere University

Over the past decades, Finland has cultivated a resilience discourse rooted in practices of “(war) preparedness”, which encompasses various security scenarios. In November 2024, Finland published its first-ever guide for citizens and households to prepare for incidents, crises and emergencies. This initiative places resilience within the domestic sphere and thus, links it intimately with national security discourse. The proposed practices often appear harmless however, they can be considered as normalizing elements for militaristic processes and mindsets in everyday life.

By analyzing the above-mentioned preparedness guide, we critically reflect on the Finnish conceptualization of resilience to challenge current perspectives on gendered militarized masculinities and femininities, and the normalization of militarization. The aims of this paper are twofold: First, it adds to feminist conversations on militarization in the Nordics; and second, it contributes to emerging research on resilience in so-called peaceful societies.

4. “Caught with our pants down”: Gendered constructions of the Baltic Sea Islands in the context of NATO’s Northern enlargement

Christine Agius, Swedish Defence University,
Emil Edenborg, Stockholm University, and
Sanna Strand, Stockholm University

Finland’s and Sweden’s decisions to join NATO have created a new border between NATO and Russia and new strategic realities and tensions in the Baltic Sea; a change described in news media as a shift from a ‘sea of peace’ to a ‘NATO lake’. Our contribution zooms in on the Baltic Sea islands of Gotland (Sweden) and Åland (Finland) as sites of military tension and build-up. We highlight how arguments favouring the military fortification of both islands – as portrayed in publicly-available NATO documentation, think

tank reports, and Swedish, Finnish and international mainstream media – rely on more than geostrategic reasoning and familiar appeals to protect the liberal world order. We suggest that arguments for military build-up gain broad traction because they rely on gender binaries, and more specifically, on feminizing or demasculinizing euphemism and language, which construct the Gotland and Åland as sites of weakness, vulnerability and embarrassment.

Panel 2: Caring fathers in the global context

Chair: Petteri Eerola, University of Jyväskylä
Discussant: Philippe Roy, Université de Sherbrooke

During the recent decades, a plethora of research from the fields such as gender and masculinity studies, sociology, psychology, and family research has shown how men's fathering practices have been under a slow but steady transformation towards more caring, intimate, and emotionally engaged ways of being a father. Despite a significant increase in research on more caring fatherhood practices, substantial gaps have remained, for example, concerning fathers' care outside the Global North, children's perspectives on fathers' care, and fathers of older children. Through five presentations based on chapters to be published in an open-access edited volume *Caring Fathers in the Global Context* (edited by Petteri Eerola, Katherine Twamley, Henna Pirskanen, and Pedro Romero-Balsas; published by Bristol University Press) in June 2025, this session addresses these gaps in existing research by opening new windows into fathers' care and more care-oriented masculinities in contexts that earlier research has primarily set aside. The presentations show the diverse ways in which care may be present in the lives of differently positioned fathers and their children, but also how several constraints, such as gender ideologies and father-exclusive policies, also exist and may still limit fathers' further involvement in care.

1. Caring fathers in the global context: Introduction to the book

Petteri Eerola, University of Jyväskylä (presenting), Katherine Twamley, University College London, Henna Pirskanen, University of Lapland and Pedro Romero-Balsas, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

The opening presentation of the panel gives a short overview of the open-access edited volume *Caring Fathers in the Global Context* (edited by Petteri Eerola, Katherine Twamley, Henna Pirskanen, and Pedro Romero-Balsas), to be published by Bristol University Press in June 2025, and sets the scene for the other presentations in the panel. The presentation discusses the key gaps in sociological research on fathers'

care and how these gaps are bridged in the book and the presentations of the panel.

2. 'He is our handyman.' Young people's narratives on caring fatherhood and family life in the Faroe Islands

Firouz Gaini, University of the Faroe Islands

Contemporary young people's personal narratives on caring fatherhood in an island society in transformation is the subject of this presentation aiming to expand the scholarly discourse on the 'new' father in the global North. Situated at the intersection of youth studies, critical fatherhood research and rural anthropology, and drawing on the results of an ethnographic project, this presentation explores the different meanings of culture and care in paternal masculinities today. The Faroese father, seen from the perspective of young people, is a caring father with strong bonds to the family values of past generations. He represents a 'child oriented' island masculinity with many different fathering practices and everyday lives.

3. Changing fatherhood and gender roles in Somali families: Experiences of being fathered in Somalia and in the diaspora

Marja Tiilikainen, Migration Institute of Finland

This presentation explores the experiences and perceptions of a Somalis regarding fatherhood both in Somalia and in the diaspora. The study draws on multi-sited fieldwork with 17 transnational families in Toronto and Helsinki metropolitan areas as well as in Somaliland and Puntland. The data analysed for this study comprises interviews conducted with the children of migrant parents (18 females and 15 males between 12 and 36 years of age), and, additionally, eight focus group interviews. The findings indicate a strong intergenerational hierarchy between fathers and their children, along with authoritative fatherhood in Somalia, whereas fathers in the diaspora have cultivated their fathering practices towards more intimate fatherhood and increased emotional involvement with their children. Participants' accounts reveal significant differences in how fathers in Somalia and in the diaspora perceive their own role as well as that of their children from a gender perspective.

4. Hegemonic, caring or hybrid fathers? The case of Polish fathers of adult children in ‘the empty nest’

Magdalena Żadkowska, University of Gdansk (presenting), Radosław Kossakowski, University of Gdansk and Bogna Dowgiałło, University of Gdansk

Polish men born in the 1970s are part of a generation whose fathers were either absent or adhered to traditional parenting roles. As fathers themselves, they face the challenges of navigating the systemic transformation into a post-communist country and the rapid changes in the labour market alongside the de-hierarchisation of family relations and increased demands for active parenting. In the presented study, we conducted research with 40 Polish fathers whose adult children have left the family home to identify the various types of fatherhood they exhibit. Based on qualitative interviews with Polish fathers, our analysis is guided by two key concepts of fatherhood: caring and protective. We also delve into the role of negotiation and reconstruction throughout the life course, which significantly influences these relationships. We aim to fit into the discussion on types of fatherhood in terms of historical changes in fatherhood and to demonstrate how the significant life event affects the trajectory of fathers' lives the reconfiguration of their paternal roles and how they navigate their relationships with their adult children.

5. Refugee fathers' parenting to protect, nurture and train under resettlement in Sweden

Disa Bergnehr, Linnaeus University

Forced migration to a far-away country results in great change and affects most families in life-altering ways. This study explores narratives of refugee fathers from the Middle East on how they protect, nurture and train (Ruddick 1995) their children and how they adapt their parental care to new socio-economic circumstances and Swedish society. The analysis is based on mixed-methods qualitative longitudinal data with interviews and diary notes. It illustrates some of the gains and strains that fathers experience, and shows how parenting involves challenges, adaptation, and unforeseen outcomes. Their fathering can be conceptualised as comprehensive and the fathers come across as being active parents who appear very much involved in the daily care

of their children. The study questions the notion that fathering and mothering, fathers and mothers (and their care for children), (necessarily and universally) are different.

Panel 3: Migration, emotion and masculinity: Examining contradictions of emotional borderwork on masculinities

Chair: Francesco Cerchiaro, Radboud University

This panel explores the intricate interplay between migration, emotion, and masculinity to highlight their socio-political, cultural, and intimate impact. Masculinities are shaped through emotional performances, and migration frequently disrupts established emotional patterns, thereby challenging both individual identities and prevailing cultural norms of masculinity. Migrant men often navigate the tension between expected emotional strength and lived vulnerability, shaped by (im)mobility, racialized labor regimes, exclusionary discourses, and shifting family dynamics.

Furthermore, political discourses and ideologies in host societies can significantly reshape migrant masculinities by instrumentalizing racialized emotions within distinct emotional regimes. Building on Hochschild's concept of emotional labour and Bonilla-Silva's analysis of the racial economy of emotions, this panel investigates how (racialized) migrant men navigate the emotional demands placed upon their masculinities in diverse new contexts. It also examines how nativist and Far Right discourses employ emotions as affective borderwork targeting migrant men and their masculinities.

This panel thus contributes to contemporary debates on the emotional economies of migration, offering a critical lens into the affective dimensions of gender, power, and transnational mobility.

1. Navigating vulnerability and exploitation: The experiences of gay refugee and migrant men in Germany

Yeshwant Naik, Institute of Legal Research in Rheinfelden, Germany, and Zug, Switzerland

This paper investigates the experiences of gay refugee and migrant men in Germany as they navigate the intricate challenges of integration, safety, and exploitation. Many of these men flee oppressive regimes. Upon arrival, they face substantial obstacles, including domestic violence and hate speech from the local population. They become vulnerable to exploitation by local gay

men. The emotional labor and borderwork that these refugee / migrant men undertake become vital aspects of their survival and integration. The paper explores the psychological, emotional and legal repercussions of these experiences, highlighting the struggles and resilience of gay refugee / migrant men as they attempt to balance dependency and empowerment. Through qualitative interviews and personal narratives from diverse regions, the study examines the duality of their experiences. The analysis provides a nuanced understanding of their complex lives in this new context.

2. Emotional borderwork and masculinity in migration: Navigating fatherhood and intimacy

Francesco Cerchiaro, Radboud University

Based on biographical interviews with Muslim men with migratory backgrounds married to Italian or Belgian Catholic women, this paper examines how emotions function as cultural clues (Hochschild, 1983), shaping perceptions of masculinity and belonging through negotiations around fatherhood, intimacy, and community. Participants engage in emotional labor—balancing surface and deep acting—to navigate tensions between upbringing, couple dynamics, and parenting in racialized contexts. Migration often demands both restraint and vulnerability, as men adapt to gendered expectations in the host society while confronting racial scripts. Mixed marriages become sites of negotiation, where dominant models of masculinity are challenged and redefined. These dynamics are shaped by racialized and nativist discourses positioning migrant masculinities within broader hierarchies. By foregrounding emotional labor and borderwork, this paper contributes to debates on migration and gender, showing how male identities are fluid, contested, and transformed through transnational experience.

3. Feeling like a good victim: Unaccompanied male refugees navigate vulnerability and deservingness

Paul Scheibelhofer, Innsbruck University

Based on qualitative interviews with unaccompanied male refugees in Austria, this paper asks how these young men navigate social contexts that often silence their vulnerabilities and question their deservingness for help. To analyse the data, the paper employs critical masculinity and

refugee scholarship and puts it in dialogue with sociological theories of affect. As the analysis shows, navigating a context that propagates negative stereotypes about male refugees while denying them experiences of vulnerability creates ambivalent emotional processes in the young men. Encounters with everyday racism and bleak social and legal realities create loneliness, frustration and anger. But the young men learn they need to manage these emotions and establish a confident, positive subjectivity – both as a strategy of self-preservation and in order to fit images of a “good” and deserving male refugee. The focus on affects thus uncovers intricate entanglements of subjugation and empowerment in young male refugees’ lives.

4. HATE! Exultant white masculinity and racialized masculine trauma of everyday hate by migrant men

Reena Kukreja, Queen’s University Canada

Far-right and white supremacist masculine discourses are increasingly using the trope of racialized male migrants as dangerous and illiberal incite hatred among the natives. With populists gaining political power in USA and many EU countries, their leaders exult in flexing this power through deliberate hyper-masculine gestures fused with racist, anti-immigrant and misogynist comments. Interviews with racialized migrant gig workers in Portugal, videos of hate against racialized migrant gig workers, and study of online Far right and white supremacist ideology in Canada and Southern Europe informs this paper. Drawing on critical masculinity studies, bordering studies, and critical race theory, it discusses: How does the exultation of white masculinity as normative and “protective” of liberalism and feminism position itself relationally to racialized male masculinities? Does it translate into everyday hate against racialized gig workers, and what masculine strategies are adopted by the latter as resistance against hate and exultant white masculinity?

5. The emotional labor of Muslim men: What is un/speakable?

Youssef Benzouine, University of Montreal

Over the past twenty years, several social science studies have highlighted the negative representations of Muslims in Quebec. However, migrant and racialized Muslim men remain largely invisible in this literature. This gap prompted me to

focus my doctoral research on these men, aiming to understand the construction of their masculinities and their intersection with Islam. During my fieldwork, I observed emotional labor in action, both from my respondents and in my role as a researcher, raising questions about the use of the observed emotional data. If making an already vulnerable population more visible could render it even more fragile, questions arise: who holds the power to analyze? What is the researcher’s position relative to their object of study? For this presentation, I will reflect on the boundary of what is un/speakable, integrating an auto- ethnographic dimension and the concept of “ethnographic refusal”.

Panel 4: The Burmese man in transition: Forced displacement, modernization and evolving masculinities

Chair: Joseph Black, Chiang Mai University

This panel explores the evolving roles of Burmese men in the context of political upheaval, displacement, and modernization. It examines how historical legacies, psychosocial trauma, and shifting cultural expectations are reshaping masculinity in Myanmar and among displaced communities in Thailand, such as Mae Sot and Chiang Mai.

The discussion highlights key challenges, including mental health, gender-based violence, and the struggle to preserve cultural identity. Emphasis is placed on the importance of trauma-informed, community-based support systems for men navigating crisis and transition.

One presentation focuses on how modernization and global cultural flows impact Burmese masculinity, with special attention to LGBTQA+ inclusion. Drawing from digital ethnographic research, it explores how queer Burmese men use social media to resist norms and reimagine identity.

The panel also considers how Buddhist karmic beliefs and traditional gender roles continue to influence modern expressions of masculinity. By weaving together historical, cultural, and spiritual perspectives, the panel offers insight into how Burmese men—both cis-gender and queer—are adapting to changing societal roles.

Ultimately, this session offers inclusive frameworks and strategies for resilience, mental well-being, and identity formation in times of profound social and political transition.

1. Legacy past: Historical and cultural legacies of Burmese masculinity

Aung Min Thein, Chiang Mai University

This presentation examines how historical and cultural legacies shape contemporary interpretations of masculinities in Myanmar. It explores the interplay of political history, cultural norms, and Buddhist karmic traditions in forming expectations of masculinity. The paper situates these dynamics within Myanmar's colonial past,

nationalist movements, and ongoing political conflicts, showing how these forces have shaped and reinforced patriarchal systems. By analyzing shifts in gender norms, the study highlights the resilience of traditional masculinity in a rapidly modernizing society, offering critical insights into the intersection of history, culture, and gender in shaping Burmese men's identities. Additionally, this study emphasizes Buddhism's central role and examines the conflict between Burmese and British masculinities during colonial rule. By engaging gender and Buddhist studies through a practical lens, this study offers an alternative interpretation of Buddhist masculinities in Burma that can move toward gender equality and transformative change within Southeast Asia Buddhist societies.

Legacy present: Addressing intergenerational gender-based trauma and psychological wellbeing in protracted displacement - Limitations of international aid

Marni Suu Reynolds, Chiang Mai University

This paper explores the mental health and wellness of Burmese migrant men in Mae Sot and Chiang Mai, focusing on the intersections of displacement-induced trauma, precarious livelihoods, and cultural stigma surrounding mental and psychological health. Using qualitative fieldwork and participatory methods, it examines community-based initiatives that support mental health wellness and initiatives while addressing gender norms and gender-based violence. The study emphasizes the integration of traditional psychosocial approaches with trauma-informed care frameworks, such as addressing topics around personal identity and masculinity, emotional awareness, relationships, and overcoming obstacles. As well as practices such as mindfulness, somatic regulation, and men's group therapy, particularly in fragile context topics. This case study offers insight and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners seeking to bridge gaps between international humanitarian aid and long-term development.

3. Legacy Future: Modernity and the Inclusion of LGBTQA+ in Burmese Masculinities

Joseph Black, Chiang Mai University

This presentation investigates how modernization and global cultural flows impact Burmese masculinity, with a particular focus on LGBTQA+ inclusion. Centering on queer Burmese men in Myanmar and the Thai borderlands, the study examines how they navigate traditional expectations while engaging with transnational media and digital connectivity. Using digital ethnography, it explores how young Burmese men use platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to curate visual identities, express queer politics, and resist dominant gender narratives. Through posts involving body aesthetics, humor, and coded language, they craft alternative masculinities that blend local cultural symbols with global queer styles.

The paper identifies emerging themes in how visibility, vulnerability, and community are negotiated online, offering insight into the broader socio-political implications of queer digital life. It concludes with actionable strategies for building inclusive gender frameworks, influencing policy, and amplifying queer Burmese voices within Myanmar's shifting political and cultural landscape.

Panel 5: Contemporary publishing practices and policies in critical studies on men and masculinities

Chair: Ulf Mellström (Senior Editor), *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies*

Panelists:

Sam de Boise and Klara Goedecke (Editors-in-chief), *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies*

Tristan Bridges (Editor) and Tristen Kade (Managing Editor), *Men and Masculinities*

This session will address contemporary publishing practices and policies in critical studies on men and masculinities. We live in an increasingly pressured academic world where publications and impact factor are central. As journals and journal editors, we have dual roles of maintaining the scholarly standard of the field and the well-being of our colleagues, but we are also part of a turbo academic capitalism where journals are tools in the hands of large publishers. How does this affect the work with our journals? The purpose of the session is further to discuss the publishing conditions for both junior and senior scholars in the field. We also want to make room for a discussion about the various journals' publishing practices in relation to a field in transition. What do we see ahead in terms of the field's development? What are our target groups and policies in relation to an increasingly global field of study? How are decisions made about who gets published where and how? What do feminist publishing practices look like in critical studies on men and masculinities? It is also important to discuss the conditions for the field in a politically polarized world where authoritarian regimes and regressive political change characterize our contemporary times.

Panel 6: Young men and rejection in intimate relationships: Perspectives from Quebec (Canada), Iceland, Faroe Islands and Norway

Chair: Philippe Roy, Université de Sherbrooke

The Nordic countries and the province of Quebec (Canada) share a common value for gender equality in similar welfare systems. Despite significant progress in achieving gender equality, they face high rates of gender-based violence, a phenomenon known as “Nordic Paradox”. Evidence from research and practice on violence and distress prevention points out the need to focus on young men who experience rejection in intimate relationships. This collaborative project aims to share expertise on psychosocial intervention with young men aged 16 to 30 who are affected by experiences of relational rejection such as break-ups or unchosen celibacy, which can lead to self-harm, violence and radicalization (for example, Incels). The objectives of the panel are to share current knowledge from our respective regions about violence and distress prevention among young men and rejection and to engage in an interactive discussion with the audience to expand our mutual understanding. The expected outcome is to identify priorities for future research, practice and policies for gender equality.

1. Quebec’s perspective on masculinities and break-up

Philippe Roy, Université de Sherbrooke, David Guilmette, Laval University and Audrey Brassard, Université de Sherbrooke

In this presentation, we briefly situate the current context of Quebec regarding social responses to young men’s distress. The results of a quantitative study will then demonstrate how the breakup context and men’s personal characteristics (e.g., childhood trauma, insecure attachment) are associated with suicide risk and violent behaviors in a large sample of help-seeking men in Quebec. Then we will present the preliminary results of a qualitative study conducted with young men who experienced a breakup using a photovoice method.

2. Young men and rejection in the Faroe Islands

Firouz Gaini, University of the Faroe Islands

The Faroe Islands is a small and relatively remote society in the Nordic region that is sometimes presented as a ‘Nordic exception’ because of its ‘traditional’ family and gender values. There is very limited research-based knowledge (and national statistical data) on contemporary young men’s experiences of relational rejection in the context of the Faroe Islands. Psychosocial intervention with this group of men is generally decentralized and informal. Based on my own ethnographic research on Faroese young men and fathers, as well as information/narratives from Faroese media discourse, I will discuss and share knowledge on the Faroese landscape of love, rejection, and masculinity. My question here is: can the Faroese (and other rural and remote communities) contribute to innovative psychosocial intervention plans?

3. Iceland’s masculinity literacy for boys on social media

Thordur Kristinsson, University of Iceland

The presentation will explore research findings on how Icelandic boys in their early teens use social media platforms to gather information about masculinity and how this shapes their understanding of gendered intimate relationships. Building on these insights I will showcase how this research has been integrated into educational initiatives aimed at fostering gender equality among Icelandic youth.

4. Coping with rejection: Masculinities, intimacy and mental health in Norway

Ole Nordfjell, Reform – Resource Centre for Men and Mali Storbækken, Reform – Resource Centre for Men

This presentation offers an overview of young men’s mental health in Norway, including their limited use of healthcare services. It also introduces the national role of Reform – Resource Centre for Men, which provides targeted support for men in vulnerable situations. Based on insights from their services, the presentation explores how experiences of romantic or sexual rejection contribute to distress and maladaptive coping strategies, such as social withdrawal, increased substance use, violence against (ex-)

partners, or purchasing sex to achieve intimacy. The aim is to shed light on how young men understand and respond to rejection in intimate relationships and how this can inform the development of more effective, tailored interventions. The presentation also draws on Reform's project work to reflect on the broader cultural discourses that shape young men's expectations of themselves in romantic and sexual contexts.

Panel 7: (Un)bordering queer masculinities in migration

Chair: Árdís K. Ingvars, University of Iceland

The field of queer refugee and migration studies have been growing in recent years. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding the intersection of queer displacement, racialization and border-imposed masculinities. Masculinity is performed in various contexts and expressed in diverse cultural hegemonic forms. Nonetheless, migrating queers are often subject to heightened scrutiny for being perceived as excessively fluid, transgressive or non-conforming in terms of sexuality, ethnicity, and gender.

This panel will explore how mobilized queer subjects have navigated bordering gazes imposed on them through national images, homonormativity, heterosexuality and neoliberalism on their migration trajectory, highlighting the home and receiving country. Thus, the affective process on queer masculinities in relation to diverging border regimes, temporalities and encounters will be examined. Furthermore, how queer migrant masculinities can be differently expressed at more intimate levels. For some, migration provides a space to explore or embrace their sexual identity through (un)bordering a confined perception of masculinity or exaggerating the gendered performance. Migration can also offer a means to avoid disclosure to family members. As such, migration can serve as a buffer against societal pressures, while also imposing new demands. Queer migrant masculinities are thus assembled and performed accordingly.

1. The ideal claimant for protection for grounds of sexual orientation

Thomas Wimark, Uppsala University and Rebecca Thorburn Stern, Uppsala University

In the last decade, discourses and policy discussions regarding asylum have gained momentum, with increasing right-wing politics aiming at stricter asylum systems and governance of migrants. In this, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (SOGIE) asylum seekers are becoming objects of deservingness and worthiness at the same time as other asylum seekers are deemed unwanted and underserving of asylum. Politics are gradually being remolded into securitizing settings to “protect” SOGIE asylum seekers

in asylum adjudication from others. In this landscape, much scholarship on asylum adjudication of SOGIE asylum seekers has focused on what creates authenticity. Yet, less is known about what qualities are needed among SOGIE refugees to establish authenticity. The aim of this article is to explore which abilities are required among SOGIE asylum claimants in order to establish credibility according to asylum authorities. Building on a representative sample of asylum decisions from Swedish Migration Authority, we analyse thematically what cognitive abilities are needed.

2. Racialised sexual and familial intimacies: Masculinities in the economy of LGBTIQ+ refugee support in Berlin and Copenhagen

Marlene Spanger, Aalborg University (presenting), Riekkie Schröder, Aalborg University

Drawing on interviews with refugees, volunteers, and employees, alongside ethnographic fieldwork within LGBTIQ+ refugee support in Berlin and Copenhagen respectively, this presentation develops the concept of ‘racialised sexual and familial intimacies’ to explore how support is oftentimes mediated by intimacy, operating as a form of currency as well as the idea of family. This uneven support also reproduces power imbalances that are established in specific masculine queer contexts where racial hierarchies are at play. In some cases, these interactions lead to exploitation. This presentation contributes to the scholarship on queer asylum by examining the nuanced power relations and intimate economies within LGBTIQ+ refugee support emphasizing the importance of considering racialised masculinities in these contexts.

3. Intersecting digital platforms in ableist workspaces of Dublin regulated queer refugees

Árdís K. Ingvars, University of Iceland

This paper builds on a study conducted in Italy and Greece between 2021-2024, located around nine SOGIE Dublin regulated refugee men. Three of whom were neurodivergent. After re-entering their applications for asylum, the men were mostly directed through digital algorithms into warehouse economies. Environments built on ableist working-class masculinities and fast digital learning, with minimum wages and three-month working contracts. This excluded the men from the rent market and labour/queer

solidarities. Thus, most continued to engage in sex work through dating apps. However, division between app memberships, racialized ratings and digital literacy produced distinction between exotic hookups and intimate relationships. As such, participants were hindered in merging the two for their survival strategies. That said, on dating apps they could illustrate exotic, masculine traits to procure work and negotiate their masculine autonomy. Subsequently, they self-tailored their impairments and queerness through collapsing context within and between different platforms, crafting divergent storylines.

Panel 8: Masculinity, masculinist politics, and political extremism

Chair: Lucas Gottzén, Stockholm University

There is increasing evidence that extremist groups across the political and religious spectrum have resembling understandings of what it is to be a man and they commonly advocate masculinist politics (i.e., men's rights and male supremacy) and a remasculinisation of particularly men through violence. Non-violent far-right, anti-gender, and men's rights movements also often argue for the need to restore lost manhood. This panel assembles researchers focusing on the far and extreme right and antifeminist men's movements online (i.e., the manosphere). Taken together, panel addresses important issues in critical studies of men and masculinities, including anti-feminism, masculinist politics, violence, and men's neoconservative responses to gender change. The papers identify differences in ideology and practice among various groups, particularly in relation to violence, but also common themes such as anti-feminism, misogyny and ideals of masculinity. Despite this overarching focus, the contributions also underscore the necessity of recognizing the varied and locally specific ways in which masculinity is constructed within different segments of the far right.

1. Musical masculinism and the contemporary far-right

Sam de Boise, Örebro University

This paper argues that music's relationship to masculinity is central to far-right politics and that analysing its reception and aesthetics can tell us something about the role of masculinism plays in contemporary far-right strategy. The paper examines the reception of music as it links to masculinism within the contemporary far-right, tracing these to nationalist historical arguments around music's relationship to men. It does so using think-pieces published by far-right ideologues and critics, as well as users' comments from a series of far-right web forums and streaming services. Finally, it focuses on how the aesthetics of fashwave, metal and classical music link to these ideologically-driven interpretations. Through this, it argues that implicitly gendered discourses within the music and the masculinist

imagery associated with them, support, strengthen and enhance far-right messaging.

2. From the far north to the far right: White masculinity and the myth of Hyperborea

Christopher Forth, University of Kansas

Although ancient in origin the myth of Hyperborea reflects and arguably (re)produces far-right dreams of a regenerated white masculinity in a materialist and secular world routinely described as decadent, feminizing, and meaningless, specifically by gesturing towards a primordial 'home' in the ancient far north. The 'world' in question has also witnessed the cross-pollination of far-right politics and 'New Age' wellness and spiritual cultures that has been underway since the closing decades of the nineteenth century and which is especially active in the Internet age. Albeit seemingly unrelated all three have historically deplored the ontological, corporeal, and 'spiritual' impact of modernity - as well as the supporting narrative promoted by its administrators and admirers - while promoting discredited knowledge claims, conspiracy theories, and 'utopias' of various sorts. This argument is supported by 1) a compact overview of the Hyperborean myth and its connections to New Age spirituality and 'esoteric fascism', 2) an examination of Hyperborean Internet memes as manifestations of what Partridge (2004) calls 'occulture', and 3) an overview of the three main ways that questions about Hyperborea's ontological status - as myth, reality, or spirit - functions on the far right.

3. The contemplative man: 'Positive' affect and masculinity in ecofascist visual communication

Maria Darwish, Örebro University and Lucas Gottzén, Stockholm University

Masculinity in far-right visual media is often portrayed through intimidating images of militant men. However, our study of affect in ecofascist visual communication found that men are also depicted in meditative stillness surrounded by spectacular nature. Such 'positive' representations contrast with the typical far-right depictions of militant masculinity. This paper examines how positive affective communication shapes far-right masculinity, focusing on the trope we call 'the Contemplative Man'. Inspired by affect theory and social semiotics, we analyse images from ecofascist Telegram that show men alone

and together in nature participating in meditative and nature-connected practices. The trope allows for ‘quieter’ expressions of masculinity, providing a space for men to experience intimacy, spirituality and pleasure, alongside the traditional militant persona. Such forms of masculinity visualise the ‘blood and soil’ complex through nature imagery of outdoor activities like cooking, hiking, and peaceful solitude.

4. Gender knowledge production and epistemology in the incelosphere

Evelina Johansson Wilén, Örebro University (presenting), Maria Wemrell, Linnaeus University and Lena Gunnarsson, Örebro University

There is a growing field of research dedicated to online incel communities, gathering men identifying as involuntary celibates or ‘incels’. A distinctive aspect of the incelosphere is the elaborate ‘theoretical framework’ communicated in the forums, portraying incel men as voiceless losers at a (hetero)sexual market ruled by women and biologically superior men. While the content of this incel worldview is relatively well-studied, a notable gap exists in the examination of the way knowledge production taking place within these communities is epistemologically legitimized. This article aims to fill this void by scrutinizing the epistemic logics and practices used by members at incel forums to validate their knowledge production on gender relations. By shedding light on how incels mobilize science as well as counter-hegemonic forms of knowledge production to legitimize their knowledge claims, the article offers a nuanced understanding of the intricate relation between the knowledge production of movements and counter-movements. This exploration can, we believe, form a basis for challenging and contesting claims made by incels.

PAPERS

Abstracts for paper presentations are listed in alphabetical order by (first) author.

Caring for the caregivers: Ageing masculinity and male camaraderie and caring in Paco Roca's *Wrinkles*

El Accari, Sandra. Universidad de Valencia-Spain.

de Boise, Sam. Örebro University.

The topic of caring in relation to ageing masculinity, specifically how ageing often entails both caregiving and receiving care, has received increasing attention over the last 15 years. This is both in terms of academic literature as well as representations in literature, art, and film. One such film is *Arrugas* (Ignacio Ferreras 2011) a much-praised Spanish-language film, based on a graphic novel of the same name by Paco Roca (2007). Adopting the framework of caring masculinities, our paper argues for empowerment and visibility of the caregiver depicted in *Arrugas* and analyses Miguel's role as a male guide in the traditionally "feminised" environment of the nursing home.

Men, masculinities and non-human animals in the Capitalocene: Towards a new research agenda

Aavik, Kadri. Tallinn University.

In this presentation, I critically examine men and masculinities with respect to non-human animals and human-animal relations in the Capitalocene and propose new ways of thinking about links between them. While within CSMM, men and masculinities have been increasingly discussed in relation to the more-than-human, relatively little attention has been paid to how men and masculinities relate to non-human animals and animality more specifically. I aim to bring CSMM into productive dialogue with critical animal studies and feminist vegan studies/ecofeminism. I argue that we cannot adequately understand human-animal relations and the drivers and consequences of the climate crisis without theorising men and masculinities and their links to non-human animals. Also, animals and animality are implicit in social constructions of men and masculinities. These insights have implications for the theorisation of key concepts in CSMM, such

as hegemonic, caring and hybrid masculinities and as well as for the category 'men'.

Rural masculinities in the era of depopulation

Ahlbäck, Anders. Stockholm University.

Kaihovirta, Matias. Åbo Akademi University.

The decades after the Second World War were a transformative time for rural men in Sweden and Finland. Structural change disrupted the foundations of traditional masculinity. Previous work tasks and jobs disappeared and rural depopulation accelerated. How did young men in rural areas experience these changes? How did they deal with the contradictions between old and new ideals of masculinity?

This presentation outlines a planned research project to study men aged ca 15–35 who were still living in rural areas from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s. Whether already married or not, these young men often had breadwinner responsibilities for relatives. Should they stay or move? Should they adapt to the expectations of the new era or adhere to the masculinity they had grown up with?

We examine how men's experiences were portrayed and expressed in, among other things, organisational journals for rural youth, fictional accounts and ethnological memory collections. By comparing Sweden and Finland, two neighboring countries with both great similarities and differences, we can better identify how different economic and political conditions influenced the reshaping of rural masculinities.

The depopulation of the countryside was one of the greatest historical shifts of the 20th century, yet remains relatively unexplored. The project contributes to a better understanding of the pressures for change that were directed at rural men and masculinities and also provides new perspectives on young masculinities in transition in our own time.

The proper worker and concerns over the flexibility of the white working-class man

Aho, Timo. University of Jyväskylä.

The transformation of work has sparked concern. Researchers, politicians, and the media frame it as a "crisis" for white working-class men,

positioning them as losers of post-industrial capitalism. As male-dominated industrial jobs decline and work becomes increasingly knowledge- and service-based, traditional working-class skills are seen as less relevant. Narrowed opportunities for respectable masculinity reinforce the idea that these men struggle to meet demands for collaboration, communication, and lifelong learning. Under the neoliberal ethos of self-improvement, (traditional) working-class masculinity appears as a barrier to progress.

Yet, blue-collar jobs persist in the Global North, and industries in Finland, for example, face challenges in finding “suitable” workers. This paper examines how a group (n=25) of white working-class men in the machine industry responds to expectations of a “proper worker”. I analyze how gender and class shape their attitudes toward work, their organization, and the future within a system seeking to maximize knowledge-based productivity.

Discontinuities of transition on YouTube: Trans masculinities after quitting testosterone

Amm, Jules Han. Uppsala University.

Exogenous testosterone is a prevalent transition technology for transmasculine people. On the digital platform YouTube, the trans vlogging (video blogging) genre positions testosterone as a highly transformative and desirable technology for shaping the transmasculine body and subjectivity (Raun 2015). However, recently a growing number of transmasculine vloggers have begun to chronicle their experiences of discontinuing exogenous testosterone.

I will present preliminary results from my ongoing ethnographic study on trans YouTube, more specifically an analysis of videos produced by trans(masculine) vloggers about discontinuing testosterone while still identifying as trans. By analysing these discontinuities of transition, I seek to expand theoretical frameworks around trans masculinities and transition temporalities. I will explore the blurred line between discontinuities of transition and detransition, YouTube’s affordances and constraints as they are navigated by transmasculine vloggers, and an emergent understanding of (online) trans masculinities entangled with, but decoupled from, testosterone.

Gender theory approaches to fathers’ parental leave experiences of primary childcare: a review of Nordic publications 1992–2020

Axelsson, Tobias K. Örebro University.

Since the 1990s, fathers’ use of parental leave has become commonplace, normalised, and expected, especially in the Nordic countries, which were the first to introduce earmarked periods of paid leave for fathers. This development has given rise to a research field that is conceptualised as gender research on fathers’ parental leave experiences of primary childcare. The aim is to identify and critically discuss salient gender theory approaches within this research field. The materials comprise 26 publications analysed using a thematic and retroductive method. Three salient gender theory approaches are identified and discussed: ‘the empirically situated gender theory approach,’ ‘the multilevel gender theory approach,’ and ‘the masculinity theory approach.’ Finally, to avoid theoretical homogenisation and a reified understanding of the notion of masculinities, I suggest that emerging gender theory approaches need to be developed in dialogue with feminist fatherhood research, CSMM, and childhood studies.

Sliding masculinities: Contradictory ideals within contemporary ice hockey?

Backman, Stina. Linköping University.

During the last decade some sort of transitions in terms of ideals and values appears to be ongoing throughout the world of ice-hockey in general and in specific within the Swedish national context. The long uphold expectations of a physically and emotionally unbreakable male, withstanding immense bodily or mentally challenges seem to have yielded for a more empathetic, forgiving and permissive approach in which feelings of uncertainties and doubts, or even anxiety and despair are possible to acknowledge and express. Problems not spoken about before, such as mental illness, gambling problems and substance abuse are now being recognized and brought up for discussion and affirmative actions. Through an analysis of mediated material in relation to aspects within the sport, such as violence and health issues I will explore what could be expressed as a more inclusive attitude within the ice hockey community.

Tracing the 'grey spaces' of skateboarding: masculinity, aging, and transitions in youth cultures

Balkmar, Dag. Örebro University.

Since its inception, skateboarding has been male-dominated and an unequal activity, its risks and freedom have mainly attracted younger men. However, contemporary skateboarding is a growing and increasingly diverse culture open to variations of ethnicity, gender, sexual identity and age. As participants mature and get older, it becomes relevant to inquire what it means to become 'grey' in a context so much associated with youth, masculinity and risk taking such as skateboarding. This presentation explores how men between 40-65 navigate belonging and transitions in skateboarding. Through analysis of ethnographic observations, interviews and media, the presentation discusses the practices and meanings associated with 'being a skater' as an embodied aged and gendered identity beyond youth. Transitions in skateboarding are further explored through the concept of 'grey spaces' (O'Connor, 2024) and its analytical potential to discuss transitions over the life course and across gender identities.

Destabilizing gender binaries: Narratives of gender fluidity and shifting identities from First World War internment camps

Balogh, Eszter Edit. ELTE University.

World War One profoundly disrupted traditional notions of masculinity, yet the narratives of 8.5 million war prisoners and over 400,000 enemy aliens have remained marginalized. Autobiographical accounts, including those by Rodion Markovits, Edouard Victor Michael Isaacs, Avigdor Hameiri, Aladár Kuncz, Paul Cohen-Portheim, and E.E. Cummings, reveal a transnational crisis of masculinity marked by emasculation and the disintegration of identities under captivity. Detainment forced prisoners to engage in acts of gender performativity, adopting traditionally feminine domestic tasks like decorating, cooking, and hosting as acts of daily survival. These performances both reinforced and destabilized hegemonic masculinities, while female impersonators in theatrical and daily settings further underscored the fluidity of identity in all-male environments. While prisoners often mimicked pre-war gender structures, their experiences fostered hybrid masculinities, challenging rigid binaries. These narratives illuminate the

intersectional and transformative impact of captivity on gender and identity, reshaping concepts of masculinity in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Engaging men in gender equality in Turkey: Efforts of NGOs – resistances of men

Barutçu, Atilla. Bulent Ecevit University.

Nurseli Yeşim Sünbülüoğlu. Kadir Has University.

This presentation examines the growing efforts to engage men in the promotion of gender equality, focusing on NGOs in Turkey. Our research followed a three-phase approach. First, a comprehensive mapping study was conducted to identify and document the activities of NGOs working to engage men in gender equality. This provided an overview of the scope and diversity of these efforts in Turkey. Second, we conducted 15 in-depth interviews with representatives of these NGOs, gathering detailed insights into how their activities were designed, their objectives, the benefits achieved, and the challenges, including resistance, faced during implementation. Third, we organized two focus group discussions with male participants in these activities to explore the awareness raised, the behavioral changes observed, and how these changes translated into their daily lives. The presentation will critically analyze these NGOs' activities and participants' experiences, using the themes of "efforts" and "resistance" to highlight both opportunities and barriers.

Masculinity in Nordic gender equality policy, 2019-24

Berggren, Kalle. Stockholm University.

The Nordic countries are often considered some of the most gender-equal in the world. Yet, feminist scholarship continues to highlight persistent gendered inequalities, including economical, political, social and cultural dimensions of men's practices and privileges.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in naming men and masculinity as part of issues of gender (in)equality. This development gives rise to questions about what is achieved by naming men and masculinity, as well as how these concepts are invoked and framed.

This paper presents preliminary results from a study of the Nordic Council of Ministers' reports on gender equality policy. Questions addressed include: How is masculinity named and discussed? Is masculinity invoked

in relation to some issues more than others? What understandings are implied in the uses of masculinity? And how do the uses of masculinity resonate with contemporary gender research on men and masculinities?

The problem with the problem of toxic incel masculinity: Misconceptions in research on incels, their masculinity and violence

Biedermann, Ann. RPTU Landau.

The concept of toxic masculinity has increasingly been applied to involuntary celibates (incels), a violent subgroup within the manosphere. Although various political and academic organizations classify incels as distinct from other extremist groups, I argue that their alleged motivation for violence—*toxic masculinity*—warrants closer scrutiny.

Originally introduced in the 1980s and later popularized through feminist discourse in the 2010s, *toxic masculinity* has gained traction across multiple disciplines, particularly in discussions surrounding online communities and violence. Recently, it has been increasingly used as a framework to address gaps in masculinity studies and explore the link between masculinity and violence. However, this paper argues that *toxic masculinity*, as an explanatory tool for incel behavior, is both unstable and insufficient. It critically evaluates the concept's application, explanatory power and its effects on research about gender equality, ultimately questioning its contribution to Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM).

Agency and responsibility in sexual corruption

Bjarnegård, Elin. Uppsala University.

Sexual corruption is the abuse of power for personal gain in the form of sex. If a teacher offers a student a grade in exchange for a sexual act, this is not only sexually inappropriate behaviour or sexual harassment. It is also corruption, i.e. the abuse of a position of power for personal gain. This phenomenon is known as sexual corruption or - more specifically, as 'sex for grades' - and occurs in many parts of the world. This paper uses focus group discussions to analyse the attribution of agency and responsibility in fictive scenarios involving sexual corruption. The focus group participants are professionals in international development. The paper demonstrates

how implicit perceptions about masculinity and sexuality overshadow concerns about teachers' professional integrity. It also demonstrates how a framing of empowerment and agency is applied primarily to the actions of the student.

MEN4DEM - Masculinities for the future of European democracy

Bjarnegård, Elin. Uppsala University.

European liberal democracy is under threat as extreme-right ideologies, once seen as radical, become mainstream. These movements undermine democratic values by rejecting equality, fostering authoritarianism, and legitimizing harassment and violence.

The Europe Horizon funded MEN4DEM project uses arts-based research to systematically assess strategies to counter anti-democratic masculinities. We co-create a framework for change, using different types of knowledge from academics, artists and activists. Based on this framework, MEN4DEM will develop interventions, such as live action role-plays (LARPs) and video installations, to promote democratic masculinity and equitable political participation. This paper presents the first iteration of the co-created theoretical framework, and the process that led up to it.

Rohingya men and sustainability transitions in Cox's Bazar

Black, Joseph. Chiang Mai University and King's College London.

This paper examines how Rohingya men in Cox's Bazar navigate transitions in masculinity amidst displacement and sustainability challenges. As one of the world's largest refugee populations, Rohingya communities face significant socio-environmental pressures, including resource scarcity, climate vulnerability, and shifting gender roles. Through qualitative analysis, this study explores how sustainability initiatives, such as reforestation programs and green energy projects, influence men's identities and practices. Particular focus is given to how Rohingya men reconcile traditional expectations with emerging roles in caregiving and sustainable livelihoods. These transitions are framed within broader humanitarian and environmental contexts, highlighting the complexities of navigating masculinity during crises.

By linking transitions in gender and sustainability, this research contributes to a

deeper understanding of how displaced men adapt to new realities, offering critical insights for developing inclusive approaches to sustainability and masculinity in marginalized populations.

Revisiting aeromascu- linities: the gendered discourse of sustainability in Swedish avia- tion

Blomstrand, Erika. KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Christley, Emily. KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Despite Sweden's global reputation for gender equality and ambitious climate goals, the aviation sector often reinforces traditional masculine ideals such as technological innovation, techno-scientific solutions, and hypermobile futures. This study explores masculinities within Swedish aviation through an analysis of the aviation magazine *Flygrevyn*. Building on the concept of aeromascu-
linities, we examine how these masculinities are represented in the media discourse surrounding the transitions of Swedish aviation. By analyzing over 60 articles from 2018 to 2023, we reveal the intersection of masculinity and environmentalism in the framing of sustainability transition in Swedish aviation, noting a persistent reliance on (masculine) narratives that prioritize technological solutions over more radical climate action. Our findings suggest that aeromascu-
linities continue to shape the Swedish discourse on aviation's future, offering new insights into gendered power dynamics in ongoing sustainability efforts.

Strong and steady: How masculinity ideals shape men's responses to intimate partner violence

Bodin, Maja. Uppsala University.

International studies have shown that men who have been exposed to intimate partner violence (IPV) hesitate to seek help due to masculinity norms that prevent them from thinking of themselves as victims and that contribute to a fear of being mistrusted (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). According to the most recent national survey on IPV from Sweden, 11% of men aged 16-84 reported that they had been exposed to IPV in the past year (Frenzel, 2024). Only 12% of the exposed men had sought help or support and 1% had reported to the police. In my study, I examine gendered aspects of being a male victim of IPV in the Swedish context. Based on 30

individual interviews, I show how expectations of masculinity affect men's understandings and experiences of IPV, victimhood and help-seeking. The presentation will focus on masculinity ideals related to fatherhood, as well as physical and mental health/strength.

Farming masculinities in transition?

Brettin, Suse. Humboldt-University Berlin.

Despite their central role in shaping agricultural realities, farming masculinities remain a marginalised field and surprisingly little attention has been paid to the construction of masculinities in agriculture within the context of socio-ecological transformations. In recent years, however, the study of masculinities in relation to the socio-environmental crisis has gained traction (Hultman & Pulé, 2018; Paulson & Boose, 2019). The implications of this perspective for agriculture—a sector under immense pressure to transform—remain largely underexplored.

In this paper, I address this gap by conducting a systematic literature review of existing studies on masculinities in agricultural production. I trace shifting constructions of farming masculinities and examine their implicit and explicit relevance to socio-ecological transformations of agriculture. I argue that the challenges of these transformations are closely intertwined with challenges of transforming farming masculinities, as they are embedded in specific and highly gendered production relations.

Caring masculinities as a costume? Putting the relationship between hegemonic mascu- linity and caring masculinities to the test

Buechner, Jelena Leoni Olga. Hanover University of Applied Sciences.

The supposed contradiction between more egalitarian models of masculinity and the renewed strengthening of hegemonic forms of masculinity (Wojnicka 2021) is also reflected in my doctoral project, which reconstructs the constructions of masculinity among migrant fathers in Germany (Büchner 2025). For the study, biographical-narrative interviews (Rosenthal/Loch 2002) were conducted and analyzed using the documentary method (Bohnsack 2021; Nohl/Thomsen 2019). One key finding shows that all six men in the study orient themselves toward both the concept of hegemonic masculinity and the concept of caring masculinities (Elliott 2016). My findings align with Pangritz's (2023) argument that care

can become a venue for hegemonic masculinity when it is not integrated into the broader concept of masculinity. In such cases, male hegemony is merely readjusted and disguised, allowing a hegemonic construction to be maintained.

Exploring men's perspectives on making misogyny a hate crime

Buxton, Ellie. Loughborough University.

This thesis is inspired by the recent increase in public conversation around what has been referred to as a 'national epidemic' of violence against women in the UK, and subsequent conversations around solutions, including the proposal to make misogyny a hate crime. There have also been calls to refocus on men's role in preventing this violence. The objective of this study is to explore how men perceive misogyny, and the potential influence of misogyny hate crime policy on men's attitudes towards violence against women and its prevention.

This presentation will focus on a discussion of my preliminary findings, and the key themes which have emerged during data analysis. These include: men's understandings of misogyny, the positioning of misogyny as elsewhere and an issue of the past, the role of men in prevention, and men's perspectives regarding responses to the issue.

From domination to respect: Engaging men in ecological practices for change

Campbell, Ben. University of Sydney.

This presentation will explore how hegemonic masculinity in Western contexts fosters alienation, domination, and extractive relationships with both women and nature. Drawing on eco-feminist literature, it argues that environmental harm is not an inevitable result of masculinity but a means of achieving socially valued masculinity (Connell, 2017). Given the urgency of the climate crisis, rethinking masculinity to promote ecological care is essential. Scholars suggest that contemplative practices, such as mindfulness and embodiment exercises, may help deconstruct destructive norms and foster respect for nature (Pule & Hultman, 2018; Forbes, 2022; Twine, 2001). This study examines a workshop with ten men engaging in Buddhist and deep ecology-inspired practices. Findings show participants developed intimate connections with nature, a heightened sense of interconnectedness, and a recognition of boundaries that encouraged

respect and care. These insights highlight how mindfulness and ecological practices can reshape masculinity, fostering a more sustainable and compassionate relationship with the Earth.

Caring masculinities in focus: Rethinking the concept

Christofidou, Andria. University of Cyprus.

This paper engages with the debate on caring masculinities, hegemony and domination. It draws on a recent study with young heterosexual fathers in Cyprus. It finds that fathers incorporate care into their everyday practice and actively develop relationships with their spouses and children that are based on equality and affect. When analysing their practices at home, these men are exemplars of caring masculinity. Yet, when broadening the analysis to matters that may not be directly related, yet still revealing, it seems that the same caring men, may indirectly and complicitly act and think in ways that reproduce patriarchal structures and heteronormative values. This paper analyses these tensions and complexities by discussing socio-cultural specificities that encourage a shift in fatherhood while simultaneously preserving more conservative masculinity understandings and expectations. In doing so it highlights the importance of interactional, situational and contextual factors in understanding and analysing the ways that men change.

Theorising the research interview as an affective space for transforming masculinities

Clark, Stephanie. University of Helsinki.

This paper examines the experiences of migrant men in white collar jobs in Finland, and their experiences of belonging and alterity in the workplace. The data for this paper comes from semi-structured interviews with 15 white migrant men from minority world countries. It considers the construction and deconstruction of masculinities as men coming from countries where they enjoyed a global position of power and privilege reflect on their acquired "migrant" label and the changes in power dynamics which this entails.

I analyse these men's experiences using Baradian intra-action, in which the gendered subject emerges alongside the network of bodies and forces with which they are entangled, alongside considering affective belonging - in both the workplace and in Finland as an adopted nation.

Changing Japan, changing men? What internet slang terms for men reveals about the reconfiguration of masculinities in Japan

Cognacq, Amaël. University of Tokyo.

This presentation examines how internet-originated expressions describing men reflect the profound societal transformations shaping the construction of masculinities in Japan. As the country with the world's oldest population, the lowest rate of female economic participation among OECD nations, and persistent economic stagnation, Japan faces significant socio-economic challenges. Simultaneously, it is undergoing rapid changes, marked by a steeply growing reliance on foreign workers and advancements in new technologies. While the traditional hegemonic ideal of the salaryman persists, a multitude of masculine identities have emerged. Internet users have coined novel terms to mock and empathize with different types of men. Who are the "weak men" (jakusha dansei 弱者男性)? The "unpopular men" (himote 非モテ)? The "creepy and penniless old men" (kimokute kanemonai ossan キモくて金もないオッサン)? Building on and contributing to the literature on Japanese men and masculinity studies, this presentation examines these terms to illuminate the tensions and transitions shaping contemporary Japanese society.

Improving school based mental health education for adolescent males as they transition into adulthood

Cosgrove, Louise K. The University of Queensland.

The over-representation of adolescent males in suicide globally sees high schools increasingly pressured to provide mental health and wellbeing education. Yet the impact of school-based programs on adolescent males, particularly on senior students transitioning into adulthood, is chequered. This research examined adolescent male attitudes towards explicit school-based mental health education and the implicit role of male school culture. Using a convergent parallel mixed methods design, survey data which included the Policing of Masculinity Scale (POMS), was gathered from 934 males aged 15 to 18 years across three Catholic boys' schools in varied geographic and socio-economic contexts. Results suggest widespread dissatisfaction and in-difference with current school-based wellbeing

programs. While most participants indicated a strong sense of school belongingness, comparatively few felt safe to express vulnerability at school. Participants' suggestions for improvement challenge school leaders and policy makers to reconsider their approach to wellbeing education for senior students in boys' schools.

Fashioning new masculinities: The sensual possibilities of fashion in a post-human world

Davies, Melanie Gale. University of the Arts London.

For fashion historians and cultural theorists interested in fashion, the 'fashioned' body is inexorably tied to the construction of gendered identities. Fashion is understood to be a 'situated bodily practice' (Entwistle 2000: 39). It has implications that extend far beyond the constraints of the catwalk and haute couture.

This paper considers how an understanding of the historical context of the making of modern masculinity, and the role of fashion in this, can contribute to the creation of 'emancipatory openings' (Mellstrom 2016). It explores how fashion, in its widest sense, has the potential to be one of the 'sensual and conceptual keys' that can unlock 'alternative routes to masculine gendered subjectivities' (Mellstrom 2016). For if fashion is understood to have played a part in the delineation of past, heteronormative understandings of male and female beings it can be used as material and conceptual tool in the negotiation of current/future ones too. As Braidotti argues, posthuman subjectivity is praxis (2017). This paper asks: What are the material and conceptual tools that fashion can offer us in this process of becoming?

Masculinity, body image, and fear of comparison: Instagram's influence on young Italian men's self-esteem

Di Dia, Francesco Giacomo. Catholic University of Portugal.

This investigation addresses how Instagram shapes young Italian men's (18-23 years old) perceptions of body image (18-23), filling in some gaps in masculinity studies. Prior studies describe how social media, and Instagram in particular, are able to influence self-perceptions through its curated visuals and unrealistic portrayals of body ideals. While body image concerns have been associated with women, this

analysis investigates the male counterpart, as new research suggests that young men are also affected by these pressures. Drawing on Social Comparison theory, Communication Theory of Identity, and Objectification Theory, this qualitative research employs semi-structured in-depth interviews to analyze young men's engagement with fitness-related content (bodybuilding). A closer look at the data reveal a dual discourse: while some users advocate for body positivity, others spread feelings of fear of comparison. Therefore, this study shed light on Instagram's role in amplifying societal norms, as well as in influencing perceptions of masculinity.

Let nature guide you! Swedish masculinity, nature, and emotions around 1809

Ekström, Sara. Stockholm University.

This presentation outlines a research project set to begin in the autumn of 2025. The year 1809 marked a pivotal moment in Swedish history with the loss of Finland to Russia. This defeat triggered a debate about Swedish national character and masculinity, often inspired by notions of how the "Viking ancestors" were imagined to have been. The aim of my new project is to explore how ideas about nature and emotions shaped discourses on masculinity and Swedishness during the period 1780–1840. The focus is on how nature was employed in the construction of an idealised and utopian national character. I will employ a theoretical framework from the history of emotions. During this time, transformations in how emotions were expressed and understood. It was also a period when modern ideas of nationalism began to emerge.

Public education, militarisation and masculinist protectionism

Ericson, Mathias. University of Gothenburg.

The subject of this paper is the current restructuring of public education in Sweden in relation to militarisation and masculinist protectionism. Historically public education has remained a pillar of democracy in Sweden, connected to the emancipation of civil society, with the state securing that individuals engage and educate themselves, fostering inclusion and social capital, building trust in society and political institutions among many other things. However, in later years public education has been targeted as a security problem.

This paper draw on Eve Sedgwick's notion of paranoid critique and Brian Masumi's notion of how "military affairs bleed across the spectrum". Using material such as reports, visual presentations and videos on digital media platforms I present some preliminary analyses of how waiting, suspicion and paranoia motivate institutional changes and the hegemony of masculinist logics of militarization.

From privilege to participation: Examining men's involvement in Iran's 'Woman, life, freedom' feminist protests

Farahani, Fataneh. Stockholm University.

The scholarly focus on gender and sexual politics in post-revolutionary Iranian society has largely examined gendered practices affecting women's lives, often overlooking men's diverse experiences. Despite the intersectional privileges many men enjoy in Iran, an unexpected surge of support during the 2022 "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests—viewed by many feminists as a revolution in the making—has surprised observers. This shift has gained significant attention, particularly from women, in light of men's historical silence regarding discriminatory laws.

This analysis will explore men's participation in the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement through digital ethnography, examining various online forums, discussions, and demonstrations. I will analyze cultural and artistic representations to uncover how men are engaged and presented in these spaces. Conceptually, I will focus on how normative notions of (un)desirable masculinities (and femininities) are challenged or reaffirmed during this pivotal period, aiming to elucidate the evolving landscape of gender relations in contemporary Iran.

The cultured thug: Unpacking far-right meaning-making around physical culture and masculinity.

Farrell-Molloy, Joshua. Malmö University.

Radical ideologies provide adherents with a deep sense of personal meaning. For the far-right, this sense of meaning can be intensely embodied through the practices and aesthetics of physical culture. This article examines how the far-right constructs meaning-making around physical fitness by utilising a netnographic approach on platforms X and Telegram, to conduct a comparative contextual analysis of the two most important digital far-right communities focused on

physical culture. Firstly, a white nationalist body-building online subculture that promotes pseudoscience and alternative health and nutrition advice, and secondly, the online activities of a transnational network of clubs focused on combat sports.

Both movements distill a broader trend across the far-right, which aligns personal development with physical strength as an aspirational model for young men in reaction to what has been termed the crisis of masculinity. This article disentangles the ideological world-building projects behind their lifestyle-anchored subcultures.

Agricultural labor and Mexican-American masculinities in *Y no se lo tragó la tierra*/and the *Earth did not devour him* by Tomás Rivera and *Under the feet of Jesus* by Helena María Viramontes

Fernández, Salvador C. Occidental College.

The male figure of the farmworker constitutes a central literary figure that typifies Mexican-American literature. Ernesto Galarza in his book *Merchants of Labor: the Mexican Bracero Story* (1964) foregrounds the importance of farmworkers for the Chicano/a communities and documents the physical, social, and psychological abuses that Mexican-American male farmworkers suffered during the Bracero program, 1942 to 1964. Moreover, Tomás Rivera's novel *Y no se lo tragó la tierra*/and the *Earth Did Not Devour Him* (1971) and Helena María Viramontes' *Under the Feet of Jesus* (1995) represent two critical Mexican-American texts that capture the personal struggles and social, cultural and economic capital that Mexican-American male farmworkers experience in the agriculture industry. Thus, this paper traces the transactional, transitional, and symbolic roles that Mexican-Americans male farmworkers play in these canonical texts that define different Chicano/a narrative periods to show how these male characters illustrate the complexity and evolution of Mexican-American masculinities.

Being in a relationship with a feminist: how does masculinity change?

Fery, Leila. Université libre de Bruxelles.

In the 1970s, radical and lesbian feminism proposed the first critiques of heterosexuality, followed by queer theories. From the 2010s (and

more specifically #MeToo) the dissemination of feminist knowledge and critiques of heterosexuality has broadened. This feminist renewal has shifted the problematization of heterosexuality: its conventional character is now questioned from the heart of the norm, i.e. directly within heterosexual couples.

Moreover, since Connell, MMS have shown the existence of a certain hybridity, reflecting an adaptation to different contexts. Little research on heterosexual men's relationship with feminist values has focused on love and conjugality. This proposal aims to characterize what feminism, as an element within a conjugal relationship, does to masculinity. How is feminist knowledge transmitted within the couple? How does it help men change their masculinity? What issues does this co-construction of a more egalitarian masculinity raise?

Between tyrant and companion: Men, family and intimacy in Swedish popular culture circa 1930-1960

Flärd, Emma. Stockholm University.

This paper suggests that during the decades around the mid-20th century, popular culture offered spaces to explore men's roles within romantic relationships and family life. While this era has often been characterised by the ideal of the nuclear family, traditional views on marriage were increasingly clashing with new expectations of intimacy and mutual affection. These themes were at the centre of a genre of popular fiction called 'marriage novels'. This paper focuses on the representations of men as husbands, companions and lovers in the imagination of readers and critics. Through reviews and publisher's marketing, the novels were explicitly and implicitly linked to contemporaneous discourses on intimacy, gender and the family man as a masculine ideal.

Historical masculinities in transition: The politics of masculinity in the Irish free state, 1922-1940.

Freegrove, Shannon. University College, Cork.

The foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922 incorporated a transition from a militant masculinity defined by political violence and patriotism to the valorisation of a domestic masculinity, mirrored in other national contexts. Informed by R.W Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, this paper will provide an analysis of

political papers and government legislation to demonstrate the utilisation of gender ideologies on behalf of Irish political parties in the creation of social and political stability. Significantly, in line with international methodological developments in the historical study of gender, this paper will move beyond cultural and political constructions of masculinity and explore the emotions contained within these performances. Using a small sample of contemporary letters sent to Marie Stopes, a well-known birth control advocate, this paper will demonstrate that by proportioning the appropriate weight to the experience of gender, historical studies of masculinity can point to the tensions which often exist between social scripts and lived realities more generally.

Neoliberal men in times of nationalist populisms: From Becker to Trump

Garlick, Steve. University of Victoria.

Masculinity has recently been attracting attention in popular culture, especially in relation to the rise of nationalist, right-wing populist political movements. There appears to be a resurgence of exaggerated, patriarchal masculinities in reaction to the unrealized promises of neoliberalism, and to the perceived gains of women over the past 40 years. In this presentation, I suggest that to make sense of contemporary transitions we need to first examine the place of man and masculinities within the neoliberal project. Focusing on the American neoliberal theorist Gary Becker, I consider how he deploys a biopolitical perspective that implicitly evokes masculinity to produce the men whose nature is assumed to guarantee a neoliberal order. In this light, I then examine the figure of Donald Trump as a 'strange attractor' that operates via performances of gender are not merely patriarchal but enact a form of masculinity produced out of the mutations of neoliberalism.

Examining attempts at engaging men - analysing the Barbershop Toolbox

Gíslason, Arnar. University of Iceland.

Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson, University of Iceland.

This paper explores the mechanisms of attempts to engage men in gender equality work, especially men of power and leadership. This is done by using historical discourse analysis to examine a specific tool, the Barbershop Toolbox,

released in 2015. It is part of the large scale HeForShe project by UN Women, initiated in 2014. We look at how the toolbox works, investigate what is the ideological premise behind it, and explore what is said and unsaid in how the tool speaks to men and others operating in the field. We ask: How does the Barbershop initiative address the issue of engaging men in gender equality? Finally, we will discuss some of the emerging themes, such as leadership, expertise, and the assimilation of feminist discourse.

The implicit and explicit challenges of ethics in Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities

Goedecke, Klara. Karlstad University.

Jeff Hearn. Örebro University & Hanken School of Economics.

Ethics is important in feminist philosophy, epistemologies, and methodologies, not least within discussions of power, positionality, and reflexivity in research. Acknowledging vulnerability in Self and Other, embodiment and emotions, and questioning abstract and universalist ideas of rationality and morality, implicitly White, male, and able-bodied, have been paramount. Curiously, in Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities, ethics are seldom discussed explicitly, and discussions about how CSMM scholars in particular may relate to ethics are virtually absent.

In this paper, we discuss ways in which ethics have and have not been integrated in CSMM. Using empirical examples from earlier and contemporary CSMM research, we discuss how a more developed understanding and discussion of ethics could benefit CSMM. This entails situating CSMM within the wider umbrella of feminist research.

Highlighting ethics within CSMM contributes to developing vocabularies and practices within the subfield, and intensifying theoretical and methodological dialogues with other feminist research.

Hybrid masculinity: Rethinking the concept

Gottzén, Lucas. Stockholm University.

This paper critically engages with recent theorizations of "hybrid masculinity," an increasingly popular concept within Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities that builds on Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity. While current literature sees hybrid masculinity mainly as a way for privileged men to maintain power while

seeming progressive, this paper argues for a more nuanced view by revisiting earlier debates on hybridity in cultural studies. Drawing on post-colonial and youth subcultural theories, the paper investigates how hybrid masculinity might foster transformative gender relations. Through a case study of skinhead culture, the paper shows that masculinity is inherently hybrid, creating unpredictable and contradictory outcomes as it encounters various cultural elements. Finally, I advocate for a more open-ended understanding of hybrid masculinity—one that offers no guarantees but seeks to build a historical bloc through cultural mixing and unstable material and political alliances.

Relational tomboyism: Tomboys in relation to masculinity, queer boys and spaces in Swedish children's cinema

Grimefall, Rickard. Stockholm University.

The tomboy is a prevalent trope in Swedish children's cinema. Jack Halberstam (2004) has argued that the types of categories for gender and sexual identification for women and girls in films with tomboys are not sufficient. To Halberstam the figure of the tomboy is generally subversive in its cinematic depictions. Drawing on an analysis of Swedish children's cinema 1990–2024, I argue that the tomboy figure is inherently relational – shaped by film aesthetics, the queer or nerdy young masculinities portrayed in these children's films, and notably, the absence of femininity. The tomboy is also defined by place, with different spaces enabling varied expressions of gender identity, masculinity, and sexual identification. I argue that the figure of the tomboy is not always as subversive as Halberstam makes it out to be, in the context of Swedish children's cinema the tomboy is not necessarily a subversive figure.

Young men's experiences of sexual consent

Grönvall, Ylva. Malmö University.

This paper is based on a study that explores young men's perceptions and experiences of the MeToo movement and sexual consent. The study has a specific focus on individual experiences of sexual interaction in relation to gender and sexuality norms. This paper discusses men's experiences of sexual consent in relation to norms of masculinity. The results show that the men in this study aspire to be gender-equal and feminist, which they try to navigate in relation to

traditional masculinity norms that demand men to be active and dominant in sexual situations. This can lead to a discrepancy between their ideal self and actual self, creating insecurity in sexual situations and intimate relations. The men's navigation between their ideal of being feminist and gender-equal, and the social expectations based on traditional masculinity norms, can also create conflicts and social insecurity in homosocial contexts.

Fathers who have been violent: Obstacles and opportunities for change

Guðjónsdóttir, Rannveig Ágústa. University of Iceland.

This presentation is about understanding change in fathers who have been violent. Despite Iceland's reputation as a pioneer in gender equality, father violence is also prevalent there. Research has recently taken an interest in understanding fathers' violence and their change, yet there is a lack of dialogue with feminist affect theories on change. Drawing inspiration from feminist post-structuralist and affective thought, this study analyses interviews with eight Icelandic fathers who have been violent towards their partners and children. Through narrative analysis, it emphasises how comfort and discomfort contribute to reflexivity and accountability in these fathers' experiences. I discuss how fathers changing their violent behaviour engage with fatherhood, sometimes as a performance aligned with gender equality. While they aim to assert their identities as good men and avoid shame, this performance often lacks genuine understanding of their children's perspectives. When fathers do confront uncomfortable conversations, it can lead to critical reflections and meaningful change; however, many still tend to avoid discomfort and rely on women's emotional labour. This presentation contributes to the discussion on perpetrators of violence by combining research on fatherhood with feminist research on men and violence.

Between kings and shepherds: Vulnerable transitions of biblical masculinities

Guerrero, Oscar. Universitat de Barcelona.

Biblical men were central to shaping hegemonic masculinities in early modern Spain, but their representations also introduced unexpected fluidity and vulnerability. David's transition from shepherd to king and Jesus's embrace of human suffering complicated the modeling of

hegemonic masculinities. This paper examines how 16th- and 17th-century conduct literature and mystical writings framed these transitions, negotiating between spiritualized vulnerability and dominant masculine expectations. Instead of pointing to a crisis, these texts reveal an ongoing process in which biblical models adapted to contextual norms while incorporating humility, suffering, and transformation. By exploring how religious discourse engaged with these vulnerable masculinities, this study highlights the flexibility within hegemonic frameworks and the role of biblical narratives in shaping and redefining masculine ideals in early modern Spain.

Performing care: Masculinities and mental health on TikTok.

Guglielmelli, Nicoletta. University of Genoa.

This study is grounded in a digital feminist ethnographic journey examining how masculinity informs mental health in digital spaces. It analyses how cisgender men articulate experiences of mental distress and suffering on the social media platform TikTok. In both public and academic debates, men's mental well-being is emerging as a crucial area where masculinities in neoliberal contexts are evolving (Oliffe et al., 2012; Chandler, 2019; De Boise & Hearn, 2017). This research underscores the necessity of engaging with "new" digital contexts and tools to explore this critical issue.

Drawing on queer (Butler, 1996; Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 1990) and posthuman theories (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1991), the study examines the dynamics of men's mental health and care practices (Ahmed, 2007; hooks, 2000) shared on TikTok. It highlights how emotions, discomfort, and suffering are co-constructed by men and more-than-human actors, emphasising the transformation of masculinities through online connections and (homosocial) communities involving mental health, emotions, and embodiment.

Masculinity crisis in gender equal Sweden? Men's movements and activism 1980-2020

Hill, Helena. Södertörn University.

In this paper, I examine a study comparing two men's organizations, one from the 1980s (Mannen) and one from 2020 (Mannens väg). I analyze their perspectives on masculinity and femininity, as well as the recurring notion of masculinity being in crisis. The study reveals that the

ideas of crisis and remasculinization appear in both organizations, and they share many similar views. However, the crisis of masculinity is repeatedly framed as something new. Both organizations employ spatio-temporal logics (Hemmings 2021), referring to an abstract "past" when males and females were considered as complementary and unproblematic. They also attribute what they perceive as extreme or exaggerated to other groups, such as feminists and the "excessive" pursuit of gender equality. Although neither organization is explicitly antifeminist, their views align closely with those of more overtly antifeminist and misogynistic men's groups, thereby contributing to the reinforcement of patriarchal social dynamics.

Biographic disruption and identity reconstruction in men's journeys of hair loss

Hodkinson, Paul. University of Surrey.

In this paper I explore men's experiences of hair loss as a form of biographical disruption (Bury 1982), where past self-image and identity become severed from the present and future self (Wilson and Stock 2019). Drawing on qualitative research involving 34 UK men aged between 18 and 49, I show how men's journeys of hair loss often involved periods of disorientation and emotional struggle amidst stark changes to their appearance and their relationship with masculine appearance ideals (Jankowski et al 2021). I explore the development of different responses, including struggles to hide or arrest hair loss, and attempts to reconstruct new forms of appearance and identity, inclusive of baldness. Although many eventually came to a point of greater acceptance, in which identity and hair loss felt more reconciled, I show how developing responses to disruption involved the complex navigation of competing masculine expectations.

Navigating masculinities and social change: Lessons from single-sex boys' schools in Queensland, Australia

Holohan, Lisa. The University of Queensland.

Gender justice and equity are critical in education, shaping boys' development as empathetic and inclusive global citizens. However, entrenched gender norms often constrain boys' engagement with these principles. At the same time, masculinities are increasingly fragmented, with some boys embracing inclusivity while others remain tied to traditional norms.

This research examines how educators, students, and alumni in single-sex boys' schools negotiate hegemonic masculinities, both reinforcing and challenging them. It investigates how these settings foster inclusion amidst complex social change, where boys face conflicting messages about masculinity. Using qualitative data from focus groups and interviews, the study explores how narratives of masculinity are constructed, resisted, and redefined.

For scholars in critical studies of men and masculinities (CSMM), these findings offer valuable perspectives on fostering inclusivity and advancing gender equity. Insights from single-sex boys' schools highlight how these settings both enable and challenge dominant norms, contributing to broader social justice debates.

"Masculinities in the margins": Children conceptualising othered masculinities in Finnish primary school

Huhtala, Ilmari. University of Helsinki.

This presentation explores my PhD research plan on how children conceptualize and hierarchize masculinities. Drawing on Foucauldian (1976/1990) perspectives of discourse and power/knowledge, and Butler's (1990) theory of gender as performative, I examine children's views on masculinities. Previous research delineates masculinities as an important element in children's peer hierarchies (Huuki, 2010; Manninen, 2010). These hierarchies often valorize traits such as sportiness, aggression, and dominance, particularly among boys, shaping their social roles and emotional expression. I also discuss how masculinities are not monolithic but intersect with differences such as race, locality, and class, adding complexity to their construction and interpretation. By analyzing these processes, I aim to explore how masculinities contribute to the perpetuation of restrictive gender norms, limiting boys' opportunities for diverse self-expression and wellbeing. Ultimately, this presentation seeks to amplify understanding of the intersection of gender, power, and childhood, and to consider implications for fostering a more inclusive school.

Hegemonic masculinities in affective digital foodscapes: Male creators navigating follower feedback in food-related video-based social media

Hyvönen, Henri. University of Eastern Finland.

In social media, food has become an arena of identity work for men, both content creators and commenters. Yet, the relationship between men who create food content and their followership has remained relatively underexplored. Drawing on interviews and netnographic fieldwork in Finland, this paper focuses on how comments and commercial opportunities shape male creators' operating environments within digital spaces centered around food, and how these environments shape ontologically secure positions and practices for men. This study demonstrates that social media work necessitates flexibility and self-minimization. Commenters were seen as both a resource and a threat, which led to cautious concessions towards both defenders of men's conventional eating habits and their critics. Men's social media work incorporated feminized elements of customer service, shaping hybrid masculinities. However, these practices were often driven by fear and caution, resulting in passive acceptance of various commenting cultures and allowing space for masculinist hostility towards veganism.

The border masculinity of refugee hunters in Europe

Ilieva, Kristina. University of Gloucestershire.

In the transition of asylum seekers seeking safety in Europe, a distinct mode of masculinity emerged in rural border regions: that of the "refugee hunter." The paper examines the identity of the "refugee hunter" from a gender perspective. I argue that the gendered identity of the "refugee hunter" combines a feminised victim and a vigilant masculinised protector, targeting asylum seekers. The masculinised protector patrols the European border to defend the victimised national and regional community from the immigrant Other, while the state is perceived as failing to govern effectively. The masculinist "refugee hunter" identity has produced a new mode of hegemonic masculinity, where asylum seekers are constructed as criminals, while white men's border patrols as heroic. The paper draws on ethnography in a region in the EU bordering Turkey and highlights how such constructs reinforce existing racial and gender hierarchies,

redefining masculinity at the intersection of migration and border security.

Men's online responses to Greta Thunberg - a discourse analysis

Johansson, Joakim. Mälardalen University.

The purpose is to study how men relate to Greta Thunberg's environmental activism on her official X/Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts. How are gender deployed as discursive resources in intersections with age, (dis)ability, coloniality, race and ethnicity in men's online responses to Greta Thunberg's climate activism on her official X/Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts? A body of research on online hostility towards Greta Thunberg is available, revealing the ageism, sexism and ableism (Park et al., 2021), and the industrial-breadwinner masculinities (Vowles & Hultman, 2021) involved. Studies are, however, needed that include a wider spectra of reactions, also positive ones, and that can bring more nuance and complexity to the topic. This includes avoiding explicit or implicit dichotomization of men's responses as of "good men" or "bad men". To achieve this, the paper will use protective masculinity (Wojnicka, 2021; Åse, 2018; Spivak, 1988) as a guiding concept in the empirical analysis.

Mining for more caring and inclusive masculinities? A review of the research field of gender industrial mine work and organizations

Johansson, Kristina. Luleå University of Technology.

Heimann, Samuel. Luleå University of Technology.

Drawing on a scoping review of the expanding research field of gender in industrial mine work and organizations, our paper aims to explore the theoretical construct of masculinities within mining research as well as the empirical contributions within the field. As demonstrated in extensive studies, mining is a male-dominated industry permeated by masculine ideals, cultures and work valorisation. Theoretically explored from the perspective of "doing gender" and 'gendered organizations', mining is foremost understood as an arena of a specific rural-blue collar masculinity where worker collective and rural masculine ideals are entwined in a form of 'macho masculinity' whose ideals are performed through manual labour, risk taking and physical prowess. Yet

new technologies and production processes means mining work is changing, as are the gender order of surrounding communities and the gender equality objectives of mining companies. Within these processes we explore possible transitions to more caring and inclusive masculinities.

Blurred lines: Negotiating masculinities in the art classroom, a critique of male artist /teacher identities in flux

Jones, Andrew. University of Southern Queensland.

How do male art teachers navigate the visual arts classroom? The dual identity of both artist and teacher has been described as problematic, as the terms used to describe both 'artist' and teacher cannot describe the true concept of what exists between the space of 'artist and 'teacher' (Thornton, 2013). It is said to be a constant negotiation between the two; however, it can be complex, indeterminate and ambiguous in the conception of an identity (Hall, 2010; MacDonald, 2017). Furthermore, studies seek to explore the issue of male and female artist-teacher identities through 20th Century theories of 'traditional gender roles' (Kimmel & Messner, 1992; Kimmel, Hearn, & Connell, 2004), and the struggle remains in resolving the integration of the male artist's life, into what is a traditional feminine teaching role (Brooks & Daniluk, 1998). There is also an intense anxiety of what is considered to be the acceptable face of masculinity in schools (Martino, 2008), however, this fails to address issues of gender politics and the dynamics of sexuality in the devalued status of male art teachers 'doing women's work' in an educational environment (Williams, 1993); which is further perceived as a feminised caring and nurturing vocation, which threatens traditional values of masculinity (Hooks, 2004). This moral anxiety of the male teacher can be focussed on gender relations, student dynamics, sexuality, pedagogical practices and a reverse sexism (Lingard & Douglas, 1999; Martino, 2008); as it is open to layers of interpretation through the complexity of the 'women's gaze' and then men's responses to that gaze. Those masculinities within the classroom may be interpreted as problematic (Smedley, 2006), and stereotypes of art teachers persist and seen as non-conformist and unconventional, which does not always sit comfortably within the expectations of teachers in secondary schools (Thornton, 2005). In critiquing the notion of male 'artist /teacher'

identities, we may bring more focus to their professional identities, and provide further insight into the pedagogy, morals, ethics and routines of school life, and further opportunities to critique gender roles in the classroom.

The evolution of the men's studies in the international and Spanish sphere

Joya, Lucía Martínez. University of Almería.

Men's studies are a recent field of study which has been developed in the 70's. However, this field of study will only gain scientific and social relevance in 2018. Regarding this eventuality, this paper is based about a bibliographical review made with Prisma method.

Through Prisma method, it has been selected those journals specialized exclusively in masculinity studies. These journals have been classified by year of creation, quarter and topics of interest. In addition to the analysis of the main international journals in this field, it has been made a study of the most relevant authors on the international scene and in the Spanish-speaking world. It has been obtained 20 authors in total.

The result of this bibliographical review offers us a picture of how in English-speaker countries this field has been developed earlier than in the Spanish-speaker countries. Finally, there is a review about how masculinity studies in Spanish world relate to those developed in the English one.

'My sex[uality] is transsexual': The gendering of sexual practices

Kade, Tristen. University of California, Santa Barbara.

With intense anti-transgender and anti-feminist legislation and on-going anti-Black racism in the U.S., it is crucial to understand how Black trans-masculine people and Black masculine-presenting women navigate and accomplish masculinity throughout their life. Their experiences uncover critical insights on how inequalities associated with race, gender, and sexuality intersect. Drawing upon in-depth interviews with Black trans-masculine and Black masculine-presenting women, I document how dominant ideologies of race, gender, and sexuality are resisted, transformed, and (re)produced through Black trans-masculine understandings and enactments of masculinity within sexual interactions throughout their life. I empirically address (1) how

masculinity is accomplished in sexual interactions, (2) how race, gender, and sexuality interact to shape these accomplishments, and (3) how these masculine accomplishments transform and (re)produce dominant ideologies. Black trans masculine people and Black masculine-presenting women provide novel insight in how dominant ideologies of race, gender, and sexuality are contextually subverted and (re)produced within and beyond sexual interactions.

Humiliation through performance: Conflicting dynamics and gender relations among boys in after-school soccer

Kehler, Michael. University of Calgary.

Silva, Andres. Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul.

Miranda da Silva Junior, Gilberto. Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul.

This research examines the contentious dynamics among a group of adolescent boys playing football during school hours at a school in a region with a high rate of violence against women. Participant observation, diary entries, and focus groups form the core of the data collection. Particularly relevant emerging from this data was the ways boys viewed fights as the result of disrespect, excessive aggression, or humiliating moves. As such the violent behavior among these boys was often seen as a marker and expression of damaging and damaged masculinity within the sport of soccer. Particular moves such as the "Nutmeg" or "Rainbow Flick" symbolized skill and dominance. However, these moves also place the player who executes them in a vulnerable position, as they may face physical retaliation. In this paper we examine the complex relationship between masculinity, aggression, and vulnerability in sport, highlighting how the pursuit of dominance can lead to consequences for both the instigator and the target of humiliation within soccer among these adolescent boys.

Mediated masculinities: Trans young men in Ireland and transnormativity

Kennedy, Matty. University of Southampton.

Research in an Irish context, has neglected the specificity of trans young men's experiences. Trans men, having experienced the interactional nature of gender from another viewpoint as a result of our sex assignment, have a particular understanding of the performative and citational nature of gender. This paper focuses explicitly

on the negotiation of gender accountability experienced by trans young men in Ireland and what potential norms and boundaries emerge through this process of negotiation that are specific to transnormativity. In doing so, we can gain a deeper understanding of transnormativity and its impact as an ideology. But also, we can parse out the nuance and complexity of trans young men's lifeworlds, and draw on their experiences as shared by them to theorise, speculate, describe and sit with the modalities of gender their existence produces, along with its relationship to law, politics, community, healthcare, employment, education, activism and liberation.

Youth club, Muslim young boys and embodying Islamic masculinities: Beyond the crisis of masculinity and reimagining religious patriarchy in contemporary times

Khan, Saad. International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

In 2018, Pakistan witnessed the rise of a new feminist movement (termed the fourth wave) that has (openly) challenged various forms of patriarchies. This movement garnered systematic backlash from the far-right conservative groups aiming to "restore/reclaim" the religious-cultural identities of the youth. Anti-gender, misogynistic, patriarchal, homo/transphobic groups and individuals started to take the mainstream in forging a sustained campaign against these newly emerged feminist struggles. Social media and digital spaces offer an innovative space of contestation among these divergent groups/identities. Raja Zia-ul-Haq, known as the "Maulvi with an Attitude (MwA)" emerged as a prominent (clerical) figure who has innovatively leveraged digital platforms to expand his outreach, mainly targeting the youth, offering a non-traditional religious authority. He exemplifies a new clerical engagement model that adapts to the vernacular and modalities of a younger, digitally savvy generation (Salam-Salmaoui 2024).

This research work looks at one of his initiatives, i.e., Youth Club, specifically aimed at younger demographics, i.e., boys/girls, providing them with a platform and avenues "to channel their potential in accordance with Islamic values." While addressing the masculinity crisis, the youth club has successfully rebranded the religio-patriarchal imaginations through digital spaces (and in-person training sessions). This research will look at how a young (Muslim) boy transitions into an adult (Muslim) man while

exposed to these narratives of self-hood. By looking at the digital sphere, this research investigates how Raja Zia-ul-Haq's digital rebranding/representation of faith contributed to the evolved manosphere in Pakistan, influencing young boys to join those spaces/initiatives and movements.

Healing men: The narrative of recovery in African American stand-up comedy

Kolehmainen, Tuula. University of Turku.

African American male comedians often use humor as a platform to reflect on recovery from trauma, illness, and addiction. Richard Pryor's comedic material of his recovery after setting himself on fire, Tracy Morgan's reflection on his near-fatal car accident, and Jamie Foxx's special on his mysterious health crisis, all turn personal recovery processes into comedic material. In this presentation, I explore the ways in which Pryor, Morgan, and Foxx connect their experiences of recovery to being a (Black) man. Through examples from autobiographical texts and stand-up performances, I demonstrate how the comedians reflect on personal experiences of recovery, and how they navigate their personal and societal positions at the intersections of masculinity, race, and mental health. I argue that these narratives not only provide comic relief, but also redefine stereotypical notions of strength and vulnerability within Black masculinity.

Transformations of civilian masculinities: Ukrainian men and (im)mobility during Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine

Koziienko, Ruslana. Central European University, Vienna.

The contribution is based on ongoing research on the experiences of adult civilian men in Ukraine as affected by the limited mobility under martial law—the travel ban outside as well as mobilization processes within the country—introduced in response to the Russian all-out invasion in 2022, and the coping strategies they develop to sustain themselves and their families while either evading the ban and going abroad or remaining in the country. In particular, the contribution looks at the transformations in civilian men's masculinities and sense of manhood, especially against the rise of military masculinity; how the latter has reshaped the hierarchy of masculinities in Ukrainian society; and what kind of alternative or strategic masculinities have been

formed by civilian men. The contribution also discusses how these processes relate to the transformations in and contestations over citizenship and what it means to be a good citizen in times of war.

Online boyhood

Kristinsson, Thordur. University of Iceland.

This presentation examines how Icelandic boys in elementary school navigate and respond to representations of masculinity on social media platforms. Drawing on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and Sara Ahmed's writings on gendered affects, we explore how hyper-masculine content influences their perceptions of societal expectations. Through group interviews and netnography, we reveal how boys engage with content that celebrates athleticism, dominance, and stoicism, often feeling pressured to conform to these ideals. While emotions of discomfort arise when these norms clash with their personal experiences, boys predominantly adapt their online behaviour to align with conventional masculine roles, limiting emotional expression and vulnerability. This study highlights the affective dimensions of digital engagement, providing insights into how social media reinforces traditional gender norms while presenting potential avenues for resistance. The findings emphasize the importance of incorporating gendered perspectives into media literacy initiatives aimed at fostering critical engagement among youth.

Exploring clerical masculinity in Georgia: An analysis of three cases

Lapachi, Ketevan. Ilia State University.

The research explores clerical Masculinity in Georgia. By examining three specific cases, it analyses the distinctive attributes that define Christian clerical masculinity in the country. The research draws comparisons between these attributes and the secular ideals of masculinity prevalent in Georgia, such as excessive alcohol consumption, promiscuity, or violence. It examines how masculinity is manifested by members of the clergy who are either prohibited or find it unacceptable to engage in actions typically associated with key attributes of hegemonic masculinity. It concentrates on three specific themes: family and sexual dynamics, transgressive behaviours with a focus on alcohol consumption, and instances of physical violence.

Changing the game: Understanding masculinities and rethinking inclusivity in gaming

Liegjerse, Tom. University of Bergen.

The (ongoing) research project I will present is an ethnographic exploration of men's practices and experiences in (video)gaming. The aim of this study is to understand how men make sense of themselves as gamers and men; how they play a variety of games in a variety of ways; and how they anticipate the future for men in games and society at large. The overall goal for this research is to rethink how men can be part of inclusive futures. This research is conducted amongst various groups of gamers in Berlin, Germany who regularly meet together in local venues. These groups and venues include a 'hegemonic' gaming space; a fighting game community; and a community of queer gamers. My project challenges reductive notions of masculinities that are common in studies on gender and games, allowing for a more nuanced and thereby hopeful understanding of men and masculinities in gaming.

De-pathologizing nocturnal emissions: Medicine and masculinities (19th_20th century in France and Switzerland)

Leyder, Marie. University of Geneva.

Studer, Nina S. University of Geneva.

In the mid-19th century, nocturnal emissions during sleep came to be defined as symptoms of spermatorrhoea. This disorder affected how men experiencing this allegedly harmful loss of semen were perceived, as nocturnal emissions represented a loss of masculinity. At the turn of the century, these bodily phenomena came to be associated with natural bodily processes linked to puberty. In this new landscape a lack of nocturnal emissions came to be seen as a cause for concern.

In this presentation, we will analyse this transitional moment in how nocturnal emissions were perceived in medical practice. What does this process - from wet dreams being a moral and physical danger, to them being perceived as a natural and healthy development - tell us about different forms of masculinities? What models of masculinity lie behind these different ways of thinking about nocturnal emissions?

An industrial way of life in jeopardy? Negotiating working-class-masculinities in the aftermath of plant closure

Lie, Juni Katrine. University of Oslo.

In this session I present my PhD-project, in its early stages. In the project I investigate how working-class men negotiate masculinity in an industrial context characterized by the processes of deindustrialization and reindustrialization. As a former site for paper pulp production and subjected to social and economic changes in the aftermaths of plant closure, I take the small industrial community of Tofte, in Norway, as my case. I focus on industrial “ways of life” such as, but not limited to, working rhythm, leisure activities, comradery, family relations, provider role and self-esteem; and how these are renegotiated considering plant closure and the possibilities for new industrial activity. Is the industrial way of life at Tofte in jeopardy? Or will it see a revitalization? And how do the men see their basis for livelihood amidst these changes and insecurities? Though an ethnographic study, with special attention to how social class and social gender interact in the men’s lives, I seek to shed light on these issues and questions.

Masculinity and social divisions: Who practices which types of gender roles?

Ljunggren, Jørn. Oslo Metropolitan University.
Lie Andersen, Patrick. Oslo Metropolitan University.

Recent scholarly and societal interest in “new masculinities” highlights their multiple, intersectional, and fluid nature. However, much of masculinity research remains focused on dominance, in line with gender studies’ tradition of exposing power structures. Key concepts such as “patriarchal,” “hegemonic,” and “toxic” masculinity dominate the discourse, while alternative masculinities are often framed within systems of male dominance (e.g., “complicit” or “subordinate” masculinities; (e.g. Connell, 2005).

This study addresses a gap in empirical research by analyzing masculinity within a broader social framework. Drawing on Norbert Elias’s (1987) concept of gender as dynamic, we apply an inductive “life form” analysis to Norwegian survey data (N=3,471, 2023–2024). Using Latent Class Analysis, we examine masculinity configurations across three dimensions: practices, attitudes, and traits. Rather than predefining gendered traits, we explore their

intersectional and demographic compositions, offering a nuanced perspective beyond traditional categorizations.

“I felt like I was trying to bend myself”: Affective tensions in men's negotiations of normative masculinity and social change in Australia

McCook, Sarah. Monash University.

Feminist theory has drawn our attention to the political work of felt experience in reproducing and resisting social inequalities like gender, race/ism, and cisheteronormativity. In this paper, I explore findings from qualitative interviews with men aged 25-39 in Australia, centring their reflections on navigating the affective tensions of normative masculinity in transition, contextualised by growing public attention to men’s privilege and gendered violence. For some men in this study, violence and inequality were deeply felt as pervasive forces in their lives to be resisted through careful and imperfect attention to how they move through the world, while for other men, responsibility for violence was shifted to the bodies of Other men. Taken together, these reflections help to ground our understandings of gender, violence, power and normativity in men’s lived experiences, ultimately strengthening our efforts to catalyse socially just futures.

Navigating polarised discourses: Young men's feelings towards violence against women prevention messages in Scotland

McQueen, Fiona. Edinburgh Napier University.

Currently young men in Scotland have largely grown up in a cultural space that supports feminist understandings of violence against women (VAW) as wrong, demonstrating basic gender equitable beliefs. However, young men have also experienced a backlash against feminism which has suggested a process of ‘over-feminisation’ that demonises young men through characterizing them as problematic and potentially violent. Through analysing the accounts of 20 young men (aged 18 to 25 years) living in Scotland this paper will examine how they are navigating this polarised terrain. The primary focus of this analysis is on the centrality of how young men feel about messages around preventing VAW including feeling guilty or being made to feel ‘bad’ about the violent actions of other men. Emotion will be examined as central to young men

'knowing what's acceptable' in their performances of masculinities as they navigate their way through the polarised terrain of gender politics.

Safe masculinities

McShane, Brian, De Montfort University.
Whelan, Michael, University of the West of England.

This paper presents the concept of safe masculinities to understand young men's experiences of violence in urban public spaces, through ages eight to seventeen. Using data from two distinct ethnographic research projects, conducted in the same area of London, UK, across an eight-year period we explore the ways young men construct and perform masculinities towards feeling safe. We consider the significance of belonging for young men in the contexts of place and space and how this relates to experiences of vulnerability and the function of violence within their identity constructions and relationships as they move through childhood and young adulthood. A central pursuit within the paper is drawing out what it meant for young men to be and feel safe in the urban public spaces they occupied, to offer important insights for practitioners and policy makers seeking to address issues of violence, marginalisation and health through practicing more inclusive masculinities.

Masculinity, suicide, and ecologies of despair

Mellström, Ulf. Karlstad University.
Andreas Henriksson. Karlstad University.

In this presentation, which is part of a book project on masculinity and suicide, which follows a study on masculinity and suicide conducted in a region of MidSweden between 2019 and 2023, we argue that suicide should be understood in terms of affect, masculinity and relationality. In particular, we show how contextualising them as part of what we call 'ecologies of despair' can help us expand the perspectives on liveability, masculinity and suicide prevention.

We conclude that the affective dimensions of masculinity, depression, loneliness and poverty are underdeveloped themes in understandings of suicide. We also want to consider it as a way of approaching a form of endpoint on masculinity and ontology.

Curating digital transitional spaces for self-explorations of bi+sexualities and masculinities

Miesiac, Mateusz. Södertörn University.

This presentation looks into how digital venues can be curated as transitional spaces for navigating and re/negotiating the dynamics of bi+sexualities and masculinities among bi+sexual men*. The notion of transitional space stems from Donald Winnicott's concept of transitional object being a facilitator of relationships between the self's internal affective and cognitive intensities and external cultural, social, and – by extension – political forces. Drawing on that and using the example of Bi+ Men's Digital Life Writing Archive (biarkiv.se) project, I showcase how digital spaces can facilitate and support personal and collective reworking of bi+sexualities and masculinities in relation to one another. I argue that creating such transitional spaces can give nuance to dominant masculinity studies methodologies, aiding the field with non-representational participatory art-based approaches. Additionally, it can serve as a practical method with which to directly address men's hampered abilities for self-expression and to contest gender-specific schemes of identity concealment among bi+sexual men*.

Men in political scandal: Accountability and public interest

Minić, Milica. University of Iceland.

In November 2018 people in Iceland awoke to a peculiar information leak: a group of male parliamentarians was recorded in a local bar, using demeaning and misogynist language in relation to their female colleagues in the Parliament. In a nauseating recording spanning almost four hours, the group can be heard discussing their colleagues in the most derogatory terms. The vitriolic mix of slurs and hate speech shocked the public. At the same time, it confirmed, and reinforced, the perception of party politics being a "boy's club." The presentation examines this complex scandal as a point of rupture which exposed multiple problems: hegemonic masculinities in Icelandic politics; the normative vacuum related to the position of whistleblowers and the parliamentary codes of conduct; and multiple leadership challenges involving men and accountability. The presentation will put the concepts of hegemonic masculinity, hypocrisy, and public interest into conversation, in order to

shed light on needed political transitions towards increased accountability.

Masculinity, migration and care: Men working in the adult social care sector in England

Monkcom, Ella. University of Sheffield.

‘Caring masculinity’ is an emerging and increasingly significant concept within men and masculinities studies. Initial explorations of the concept have suggested that it may hold radical potential for gender equality movements, yet have also highlighted its more hegemonic, classed and racialised dimensions. Further research is therefore needed to deepen our understanding of ‘caring masculinity’ in theory and practice, and to continue expanding its application beyond fatherhood studies.

This paper draws on research conducted with British, Romanian and Nigerian men working in the adult social care sector in England. From Autumn 2024 to Spring 2025, ~30 men were interviewed using a life mapping approach, providing rich detail about their caring trajectories. By placing these caring narratives in dialogue with ethics of care literature and other work, we can gain insight into how men define and practise care and the strengths and limitations of applying the caring masculinities concept in this context.

Challenging hegemonic masculinity: Conscientious objection and gendered militarism in Finland

Moon, Myungjin. Tampere University.

Conscientious objection remains underexplored in critical studies on men and masculinities as well as in peace and conflict studies, despite its potential to challenge militarisation and hegemonic gender norms. Therefore, this study investigates the intersection of masculinities and gendered militarism through a thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with 10 Finnish conscientious objectors (COs). The study elucidates how they navigate societal stigma stemming from being perceived as feminine in the context of conscription and existing gender relations in Finland. It also analyses how COs situate their masculinities within Finnish society's militarised context through their perspectives on gender equality discourse, particularly regarding gender-neutral conscription debates. By illuminating their reflection on their positionality as men who deviate

from the hegemonic gender order, the study contributes to an understanding of masculinities beyond traditional associations with violence, offering a nuanced perspective on gendered militarisation and resistance to it.

Masculinities and intersectionality in Fresh Meat

Navarro Pérez, Margarita. Universidad de Murcia.

This paper investigates the representation of masculinities and the transition to adulthood in the popular television comedy series *Fresh Meat*. The show follows first-year university students as they navigate the challenges of academic life, the pressures of becoming adults, and the complexities of shaping their identities. Central to this analysis are the male protagonists, whose personal journeys illustrate the struggles, triumphs, and setbacks inherent in redefining masculinity during this pivotal life stage. Drawing on Judith Butler's theories of gender construction and the framework of intersectionality, this study examines how the (re)construction of masculinities is interwoven with the (de)construction of gender and sexuality. The series offers a compelling lens through which to explore the evolving nature of male identity and the nuanced processes of performing gender during the transitional period of young adulthood.

Gender-inclusive leadership practices in the gendered organisation: What men (can) do and what women just don't see

Nentwich, Julia. University of St. Gallen.

Jäckel, Dorethea. Vivantes Klinkim Berlin.

Schambach, Gabriele. University of St. Gallen.

Moving beyond individual competencies, this study explores gender-inclusive leadership practices (GILP) in the highly normative context of the gendered organisation. 1507 managers in Switzerland completed the anonymous online survey. While the 852 male managers self-rated the questionnaire, the 353 female managers rated their external perspective on men's engagement. The data is analysed descriptively and using variable cluster analysis. The results highlight the practices that are already well-established, while others are perceived as more critical. Most strikingly, the results highlight a gender gap in perceptions. By contextualising what executives can and can't do in the context of the gendered organisation, our findings highlight how GILP is

intertwined with power and privilege. As a result, male managers, although highly motivated, are more committed to maintaining the status quo of the gendered organisation. Our findings provide important insights into the ambivalent outcomes of male allyship activities to promote gender equality.

To enhance or not to enhance: Gender, hybrid identities, and exoskeletons in the armed forces.

Noack, Vanessa. Uppsala University.

In the military context, exoskeletons (wearable robotic devices) can increase the already advanced bodily abilities of service personnel in terms of their strength and endurance, allowing them to exceed their physical limits. Architecting such a device requires redefining the relationship between the technology and humans as end-users, in this case, soldiers. To understand this shift and possible transformation of masculine gender performances in such a highly masculinised space, I draw on the theoretical framework of 'practices of militarised masculinities' (Messerschmidt and Quest 2024) from a feminist perspective. In my work, I aim to explore and analyse how practices of militarised masculinities are manifested in and through military exoskeletons by analysing websites of companies producing exoskeletons and conducting semi-structured interviews with developers, end-users, and researchers. I suggest that militarised masculinities are transitioning into posthuman hybrid militarised masculinities whilst at the same time imposing a creation of the archetype citizen of the future.

Negotiating masculine sexuality: The role of homosociality, sexual double standards and emotional connections in young men's sexual projects

Oftedal Schwencke, Ellen. Oslo Metropolitan University.

Decades of feminist research have shown that traditional gender norms and sexual scripts influence sexual attitudes and behavior. However, research has primarily focused on how women navigate this. Drawing on sociological research on masculinity and Hirsch and Kahns' (2020) concept of sexual projects, this article explores which masculine resources are in play in young men's talk about sex and what it is for. Based on

60 in-depth interviews with Norwegian heterosexual men between 17 and 19 years old, the analysis reveals that homosocial dynamics heavily influence young men's sexual projects. Sexual conquest can acquire social status in the peer group, but there is also a risk of losing status if they hook up with the wrong person. The notion of 'hunting girls' is prominent, reflecting the pervasive discourse of women as sexual gatekeepers. A noteworthy finding is that the young men who had girlfriends would negotiate softer masculinity in their sexual projects.

Living with an injured gendered body after prostate cancer treatment: Testing a concept of 'hybrid post-surgical masculinities'

Ojala, Hanna. Tampere University.
Pietilä, Ilkka University of Helsinki.

Gendered cancers, such as prostate cancer, have shown to fundamentally shake cis-gendered identities. One of the most commonly used prostate cancer treatment, a surgical remove of prostate gland (prostatectomy), produces 'bodies without governance' by causing long-term side effects, such as urinary leaking and erectile problems. Therefore, prostatectomy often leads men fear of losing their masculinity and conventional cis-gendered identity, and sometimes refer themselves as 'half a man' or 'not a man at all'.

Based on their qualitative meta-analysis on men's illness narratives of post-prostatectomy, Thompson and Futterman (2022; 2023) suggest that men come to live with their anatomically changed bodies by practicing 'hybrid post-surgical masculinities'. This concept refers to men's multiple tactical reconfigurations and rebuilding techniques of a public masculine person during a prostate cancer journey. The authors point out that 'hybrid post-surgical masculinities' are closely connected to men's age as older men seem to be more open to qualities attached to 'hybrid masculinities' than younger men. In this presentation we test Thompson and Futterman's conceptualization based on interviews with 39 Finnish cis-heterosexual prostate cancer patients (aged 50-86) who have undergone prostatectomy.

Men's rights activists' responses to transitions in gender relations

Ojala, Martta. Nord University.

The ongoing transition to more equal gender relations, and the accompanying challenges to

male privilege, are met with anger and discontent by some men. In this presentation, I focus on how anti-feminist men's rights activists claim to be victims as male privilege is made more visible and its justness increasingly questioned. The study is based on a digital ethnography of a large men's rights activist community on Reddit where the existence of male privilege is denied and any challenges to it are perceived as discrimination against men. The transition from male privilege to more equal gender relations is seen as a threat to men, and feminism is portrayed as the main perpetrator. Drawing on Lilie Chouliaraki's work on victimhood and vulnerability, I argue that claiming victimhood is a central strategy for resisting changes in gender relations and for holding on to the power privilege affords men.

Power, privilege, and masculinities: Towards decolonising the energy transition

Ourkiya, Asmae. European Geosciences Union.

Masculinity, "race", and environmental justice are deeply interconnected, yet mainstream discussions on energy transitions often neglect their intersection. My presentation examines how racialized masculinities influence and are shaped by energy poverty, particularly for BIPOC communities globally. Colonial and patriarchal systems have long restricted these communities' access to resources while reinforcing exploitative, dominance-driven models of masculinity tied to land and energy control.

Drawing on queer intersectional ecofeminist and decolonial perspectives, I will argue that a just energy transition must go beyond reducing carbon emissions to actively dismantling racialised and gendered inequalities. By centering BIPOC leadership, challenging extractive, masculinized energy policies, and embracing care-driven, community-led solutions, it is possible to reimagine sustainability beyond Western, patriarchal frameworks. My presentation will highlight the urgent need to decolonize energy systems, democratize decision-making, and redefine masculinity.

Theorising inclusive masculinities through a poststructuralist lens

Owen, Craig. Anglia Ruskin University.

Inclusive Masculinity Theory offers an important framework for conceptualising masculinities in cultures with declining homophobia. But the framework faces several challenges when it

theorises masculinities as relatively stable sets of attitudes and behaviours. This presentation offers a solution, theorising inclusive masculinities through a poststructuralist lens. This approach reconceptualises orthodox and inclusive masculinities as discourses that produce subject positions, which may require individuals to work on themselves ('technologies of self') to inhabit. I apply this approach to data from an ethnography and a media analysis that focus on men's engagement in dance (Owen & Riley, 2020; Wong, Harman & Owen, 2021). This research reveals a complex and contradictory inclusive masculinity discourse and charts how men can transition across the fault lines of orthodox and inclusive masculinities. To conclude, I review the work of scholars who have extended this approach, applying it to men's friendships (Ralph, 2024; Ralph & Stevens, 2024).

Heterosociality and the reproduction of homosocial cultures in academic organisations

Packendorff, Johann. KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Holgersson, Charlotte. KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Lindgren, Monica. KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Wahl, Anna. KTH Royal Institute of Technology

In male-dominated organisational cultures, women often orient themselves towards men to gain inclusion, a phenomenon known as heterosociality (Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Holgersson, 2013). Drawing on studies of Swedish academic institutions, this paper advances theoretical understanding of heterosociality by identifying four distinct manifestations: first-party (self-imposed discipline), second-party (gifts of work/responsibility to men), third-party (diminishment of other women), and fourth-party (organisational care benefiting men). We demonstrate how these heterosocial practices manifest through assumption of low-status tasks, relational responsibility, meticulous task execution, conflict mediation, and strategic non-action. Our analysis reveals how heterosociality co-creates and maintains homosocial cultures through an 'individuality paradox': men are simultaneously viewed as independent agents and collective norm-setters, while women face contradictory expectations of avoiding gender-based collectivity yet are categorised as a homogeneous, deviant group. This dynamic perpetuates male dominance in academic

institutions while devaluing feminine-associated practices.

Queering scholarship on men and masculinities

Peretz, Tal. Auburn University.

All discussions of masculinities require discussions of what constitutes the group “men” as necessary groundwork. As queer theorists and post-modern feminist scholars point out, not all males are men, not all men are male, and not all people who enact or perform masculinity are either of the above; while much feminist scholarship has transitioned towards a skepticism of categories, Masculinity Studies tends to be strongly categorical even today. As a wider range of individuals, including transgender men, genderqueer and non-binary persons, women who enact butch or stud masculinities, etc. are engaging with masculinities, it becomes both possible and necessary to expand our theories to encompass their experiences. This paper explores the utility of existing Masculinity Studies concepts like hegemonic masculinity, hybrid masculinities, and manhood acts, for addressing these kinds of questions, and advocates increasing empirical investigation of queer masculinities to improve and clarify our understandings of gender and power.

Algorithmic masculinity. Meetings with the manosphere

Persson, Amanda. Lund University.

The overarching aim of this doctoral project is to develop a deeper understanding of contemporary information infrastructures and how they intra-act with young cis men’s understanding of masculinities. This study examines the configuration of digital information infrastructures, the manosphere, and young cis men’s information-related activities on digital platforms, with a particular focus on individuals living in Sweden. Methodologically, the research employs media go-alongs and interviews to provide an in-depth exploration of how young cis men discover, interpret, navigate, and negotiate information about masculinities in digital spaces. Additionally, it includes an analysis of metadata, policies, and guidelines of these platforms to capture their technological agency.

The theoretical framework is grounded in socio-material theory, with Karen Barad’s work offering critical insights into the entanglement of materiality and sociality within this

research context. Furthermore, the study engages with Judith Butler’s theories of gender to further conceptualise these dynamics.

Migration and negotiation of ageing masculinities

Pietilä, Ilkka. University of Helsinki.

Research on migrant masculinities has shown that moving to another country and adapting to new social environments requires men’s reconstruction of their masculinities. However, such negotiations of masculinities appear differently for men of different ages as older men need to consider their status both in terms of migration and ageing. In a project approaching older migrant men’s social relations and sense of belonging, we analysed our interview data (n=21) from the perspective of how older men position themselves in relation to intersectional inequalities of ethnicity and ageing. Our analysis showed that the men primarily considered their position as migrants and not in terms of their age. They seemed to consent to structural discrimination they had experienced and located themselves in a subordinated position both as migrants and older men. This notion is in line with previous research which has suggested that hegemony requires marginalized groups’ consent of their subordinated status.

Men, masculinities and ecological care

Prattes, Riikka. Monash University.

This paper investigates the practices of young men active in movements for climate justice in the Nordics. Environmental and social destruction has long been linked to harmful masculine ideals (Merchant 1980; Plumwood 1993). Scholars have highlighted how “traditional industrial notions of manhood and masculinities” (Hultman and Pulé 2018, 8), “petro-masculinity” (Daggett 2018), or “radiocative masculinities” (Roy 2016) are key in upholding destructive gendered capitalist and militaristic structures (Hickey-Moody 2019; Pulé and Hultman 2021; Nagel and Lies 2022; Cohn and Duncanson 2023; Krasny 2023). By contrast, care work, climate activism, and care within climate movements have been gendered as feminine (Hochschild 1989; Gardner et al. 2023). Employing the concept of caring masculinities – defined as practices that embrace care and reject domination (Elliott 2016; Roberts and Prattes 2023) – to grasp young men’s care for climate

and within social movements, the paper expands the hitherto use of the concept.

Walking the talk of ecological masculinities: Prioritising relational care in theory and practice

Pulé, Paul Mark. Curtin University.

In these times of strongman politics there is a ripe opportunity for progressive scholars and activists of gender and environment issues to re-value and re-centre caring masculinities. In 2011, Greta Gaard published *Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism*, noting that ecological feminism became subsumed within and superseded by subsequent - and anthropocentric - fields of feminist scholarship and activism. Gaard criticised the dilution of ecological feminist (and feminist environmentalism) scholarship, arguing that internal conflict destabilised the discourse, leaving it vulnerable to subsequent anti-feminist backlash politics while also backgrounding the biocentric value that the discourse championed. Ecological masculinities has emerged as an allied field of study arguing that caring masculinities dwell in us all and must be reinvigorated and prioritised in order to help stem the life destroying trends of masculinist hegemonies (Hultman & Pulé, 2018; Pulé & Hultman, eds., 2021). But like ecological feminism, ecological masculinities is similarly subject to conflicts and contestations that risk weakening the promises and possibilities of relationally caring masculinities (Pease, 2022). A short history of ecological masculinities will be provided, followed by support for relational care where humility, accountability, slowing processes down, hearing each other, making amends, widening views and finding common ground are noted as essential contributions, along with setting firm boundaries about what ecologised masculinities is and is not. Aligned with Gaard, Pulé supports emergent posthuman materialisms throughout the field of study, which permit diverse views throughout the ecological masculinities discourse and its applications throughout civil society.

[Masculinity and identity-work in the context of group treatment for IPV]

Päivinen, Helena. University of Jyväskylä.

This presentation discusses masculinity discourses and identity-work in the context of group

treatment for intimate partner violence (IPV). Data was driven from two projects: a programme for men who have been violent in their relationships and a multi-couple group treatment for IPV. Video-recorded intervention sessions were analyzed using discourse analysis focusing on how discourses around men and masculinities are used as resources in the identity-work of the participants, and how violence supporting masculinity discourses are challenged or reconstructed in the treatment interaction. Most of the found masculinity discourses were based on ideas from traditional masculinities. However, participants did not simply position themselves in line with these discourses but were also detaching themselves from them and outlining new, more egalitarian masculinity discourses. The findings highlight the need to address masculinity discourses in treatment of IPV and the therapists' challenging but possible role in contributing to the reconstruction of such discourses.

Face/Off: Facial surgeries, monstrosity & Alain Delon of it all

Rakhilkina, Adamska Elizaveta. Independent scholar.

This paper, "FACE/OFF," advances contemporary masculinity research within transgender studies by moving beyond the binary discourse of "wrong body/right body" to focus on the self-actualization process of rendering the transsexual "invisible me" visible. It critically examines the intricate dynamics of facial dysphoria, queer aesthetics, and the grotesque within the context of facial reconstructive surgery for transmen. Through an analysis of folkloric and cinematic representations of monstrosity and documentation of DIY surgical interventions, the study interrogates the cultural and personal narratives entwined with trans facial surgery. Engaging with the theoretical contributions of scholars such as Eric Plemons and Eliza Steinbock, the paper integrates auto-theoretical insights derived from the author's encounters with facial surgery consultations in an attempt to masculinize his own face and in the tradition of Susan Stryker and Paul B. Preciado treating his body as a sight of revolutionary bio-hacking while facing systemic barriers posed by medical institutions. "FACE/OFF" elucidates the ontological transformations and psychological dimensions of facial reconstruction, challenging essentialist gender paradigms and illuminating the complex realities of trans embodiment and identity.

The regressive futurism of electric automobility

Remme, Devyn. University of Bergen.

Mainstream responses to climate change can be described as techno-economic and natural resource intensive, to the detriment of deeper reflection on how we got into this mess and transformative pathways out of it. Electric cars are an excellent example of this problem. They are promoted as solutions to reduce carbon emissions, but their batteries will require massive amounts of toxic and destructive mining for metals. Meanwhile, the widespread adoption of electric cars undermines efforts to move societies away from automobile dependence. I am interested in the role masculinities play in the knowledge production and decision making around energy transitions and electric cars in particular. I will build on scholarship about ecomodern masculinity and delve into how Elon Musk influences and is influenced by perceptions of white masculinity, shaping the far-right response to climate change.

The new masculine in South American Photography.

Renato Negrão, Wilson. PUC-São Paulo.

Based on Susan Sontag's statement that a man with a camera feels invincible and acts disrespectfully toward the people he photographs, I analyze documentary photography in Latin America. Many works by men throughout history display violent behavior towards individuals in vulnerable situations. Masked as a concern for saving humanity, many photographers aim their cameras at fragile people who, given the choice, would not want to see their image in such a state. In response, I highlight a movement of works by men adopting a new approach to the photographer-subject relationship. These are stories of empathy and commitment to others. This photography, which values otherness, offers alternatives to the oppressive behavior often seen in Latin American documentary photography.

Masculinities, care and ageing: Experiences of men in nursing

Rendl, Daniela. Masaryk University.

The presentation focuses on experiences of transitioning to inclusive and caring masculinities within professional caregiving, based on an analysis of 12 semi-structured interviews with men in nursing. Nursing, as a feminized profession,

presents unique opportunities and challenges for focusing on the practice of masculinities. Analysis locates acts of tenderness, respect for patient intimacy, and caring attention within the framework of masculine experience, contributing to theoretical conceptualizations of care and masculinity. The findings highlight the tension between gendered ideals of male strength and the discomfort associated with receiving care, as described by caregivers in general. The intersections and relationships between caregiving, ageing and masculinity show how the demanding nature of caregiving reinforces the sense of vulnerability associated with the waning of strength in the ageing process. The presentation critically explores structural privileges that support aging men in careers, which tend to be interpreted as the result of their efforts and qualities.

Vulnerable masculinities in transition: Cultural texts and the production of legitimacy and consent in the long nineteenth century in the United States

Requena-Pelegri, Teresa. Universitat de Barcelona.

The study of vulnerability is gaining significant attention in the post-pandemic world, emerging as a burgeoning area of research across various fields, including the social sciences, law, and philosophy. While there exists a substantial body of work on vulnerability as a gendered concept in these fields, it has been predominantly equated with women's experiences. My paper builds on vulnerability studies and incorporates the theoretical framework of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities to analyze different cultural productions of the nineteenth-century United States, such as advertisements, journalistic pieces, and other archival materials. I intend to examine the construction of a white manly ideal that obliterates, hides, and/or dismisses ontological vulnerability despite it being a constituent feature of living beings, while simultaneously displacing it onto non-privileged subject positions. In examining these topics, I aim to develop a nuanced understanding of the notion of transition that avoids the teleological narrative often associated with the term. Thus, rather than providing a chrononormative periodization of masculine models in which one model ostensibly shifts into another, I focus on coexistences and simultaneity rather than teleology. Additionally, I explore how these cultural texts participate in the

circulation of legitimacy and the fabrication of consent.

A sui generis transition: Masculine myths and cultural reverberation

Rivas Venegas, Miguel. Universitat Oberta Catalunya.

My contribution seeks to present a *Modus legendi* of contemporary counter-reactionary masculinities, analysed herein through a hybrid methodology inspired by the seminal work of cultural scholar Aby Warburg. Rather than discussing eventual transitions, I aim to reflect upon the constant cultural reverberation (Calasso, 1988)—an alternative form of evolution and expansion, characterised by seismic and repetitive traits. A mythological logic that endlessly generates variations of the “same three or four mythical narratives” (Eliade, 1952), producing equivalent forms of trans-epochal radical masculinities that shape a *frauenlos* (women-free) political and cultural landscape. This space of radical homosociability is articulated through the repetition of what we identify here as the “manipulated myths” (Dumézil, 1968) of transnational and cross-temporal patriarchy.

How does medical transition impact access to primary care for transmasculine people?

Rivoire, Iris. University of Geneva.

In the medical literature, transgender people are mainly considered through the prism of medical transitions. As a result, there is little data on their access to primary care. There is also little data on how transitions can influence people's relationship with the medical world. Yet transgender people can have the same health problems as cis-gender people. It is therefore important to understand how transgender people do, or do not, access primary care.

In this presentation, I propose to present the results of a qualitative pilot study on access to primary care for trans people in Geneva. Preliminary results show that transgender people have difficulty accessing primary care and tend to avoid these consultations. These preliminary results also show that transition plays a relatively positive role in access to care for transmasculine people.

I will focus my presentation on how transmasculine people's transition affects their access to primary care.

Sexual violence versus consent: Are men less assertive than women? The role of traditional and contemporary scripts on sexual assertiveness and its correlates

Rollero, Chiara. University of Turin.

Berlin, Elisa. University of Turin.

Sexual assertiveness, understood as the voluntary ability to initiate sex, to refuse unwanted sexual activity, and to discuss sexual history with a partner, is essential to an individual's sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being. Sexual assertiveness is strongly linked to sociocultural processes, as the way people are socialised makes them vulnerable to developing a more or less passive role based on dominant gender values. Traditionally, most cultures encourage men to take the initiative and always be sexually available, but this script can also be perceived as a burden, discouraging them from refusing unwanted sexual activity.

The present study aims to investigate sexual assertiveness and its correlates in a sample of heterosexual Italian men (N=209; mean age 29.31). Results are discussed in the context of gender stereotypes and sexual scripts that may influence individuals' ability to express their sexual needs and desires, and their role in promoting versus preventing gender-based violence.

More caring than you. On the incorporation of progressive masculinities into hegemonic masculinity structures.

Rudolph, Jonas. International Psychoanalytic University Berlin.

Social change towards more progressive masculinities is often seen as emancipatory. But how far-reaching are these developments really? Using narrative examples from biographical interviews, I would like to show that progressive masculinities also draw on the structures of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1999) and discuss the following theses:

1. Men draw on different masculinities, even if these contradict each other.
2. Care work, interdependence and relationality are conceptualised in more progressive theories such as caring (Elliott, 2016) or inclusive masculinities (Anderson, 2009), but caring parts are also integrated into ‘classic’ masculinity dominance structures (Baumgarten et al.,

2020) and used for relational status gain (Rudolph, 2023).

3. Progressive masculinities are thus also grounded in a dominance-based, relational structure of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1999).

4. To better understand hegemonic continuities, the similarities between progressive and classic masculinities should be analysed more closely.

(Men) managers in mining and the “green transition”

Rydström, Klara. Luleå University of Technology.

This paper presents preliminary results from an ongoing postdoctoral project (2024-2026) on the 'green transition' in the Swedish mining industry, focusing on work from a gender perspective. While gender studies in mining often centres on blue-collar workers (Heimann et al. 2023), this project is based on interviews with high-level managers. The transition appears to have manifold meanings and many of the managers did not find any given relationship between the transition and gender. All managers had a language to talk about the importance of gender equality. It was not always clear how men managers perceived that gender is given meaning in their own, professional lives. Women managers, however, provided examples of gendered work in their roles. Preliminary results suggest male managers' narratives reflect hybrid masculinity (Bridges and Pascoe 2014), where awareness of gender inequality is part of the 'masculine style' (Messner 1993) rather than challenging gendered power relations (Demetriou 2001).

Holding toxicity: Is prison a space for transiting the “toxic masculinity”?

Sánchez Hernández, Mónica. University of Bristol.

The existence of the penitentiary centres is sustained on the imagined notion they prevent re-offending. By isolating those “criminals”, the prison system is additionally deemed to promote the re-education of offenders to turn them into “good citizens”. Not only, the notion of “good citizens” is problematic, but it becomes blurry when “private life” is involved as is the case of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). And while recently, Physical Violence Against Women is

generally perceived as “not good”, that is not the case for the plethora of its forms of expression.

This paper will present early findings of a research project that explored the meanings of “being a man” for those who have been accused of Intimate Partner Violence in Oaxaca, Mexico. Situated within feminist and decolonial aspirations, this study used arts-based research methods to approach males incarcerated or enforced a perpetrator programme.

Military boredom and soldierly becomings

Sandman, Tua. Swedish Defence University.

Given its history of more than 200 years of peace, few countries in Europe have waited for war as long as Sweden. The Swedish military experience in modern history is thus one of endlessly waiting – of preparing for war but not fighting it. To find oneself ‘stuck’ in a space between war and peace is essentially a Swedish experience that cuts across time, and which has affected soldiers and military as well as society at large. As part of a larger research project on military boredom in the Swedish past and present, the present study explores how military inactivity and waiting affect notions of soldier identity, masculinity, feelings of meaningfulness, military ideals and morale. The paper outlines the theoretical points of departure and research design for a diary study with Swedish soldiers currently employed by the Swedish army.

Transnational screens - Masculinity and Arabic-speaking audiences of Egyptian Ramadan-TV-series in Sweden

Schau, Lovisa. Gothenburg University.

This paper will present preliminary findings from my PhD project on Arabic-speaking audiences of Egyptian Ramadan-TV-series and their reflections on different representations of masculinities. Ramadan-TV-series are a format of fictional TV-series that are aired during the month of Ramadan -one episode per day- in most Arabic-speaking countries. Simultaneously, they make up most of the overall produced TV-series in Egypt - itself one of the leading countries in the production of Arabic TV-series and films. Even though these series are watched by millions, they remain largely under researched - especially in relation to their portrayals of and audiences' reflection on masculinities. Using selected clips with different depictions of masculinities during individual or group interviews, the

project aims to investigate Arabic-speaking audiences in Sweden relating to portrayals of masculinities, gender relations and Egyptian pop-culture to the backdrop of their transnational experiences.

“I didn’t play that”: Affective-discursive strategies in sexual abuse cases – Emotion, masculinity, and identity performance across contexts

Schleicher, Nora. Eötvös Loránd University.

This presentation examines affective-discursive practices in two sexual abuse cases. Using a comparative case study framework, it employs critical multimodal discourse analysis to explore the public performances of the accused men. A material-discursive approach compares cases from two socio-cultural contexts: the United States, representing the global center, and Hungary, in the semi-periphery. The analysis highlights how affective-discursive strategies authenticate different identities—the “good man” in one case and “the artist” in the other. The findings challenge the idea that high-intensity emotional displays and vulnerability signal a shift toward softer or more inclusive masculinities. Instead, these emotional performances coexist with traditional, “locker-room” masculinity displays. This presentation contributes to methodological discussions on Affect in discourse analysis and broader debates on shifts in contemporary masculinities.

The conceit of masculinity

Sebastian, Tony. Birla Institute of Technology and Sciences-Pilani.

The paper uses insights from literary studies to critique the use of masculinity-as-concept in CSMM. It relates the tenuous relationship of CSMM with queer-feminist scholarship and post-structuralist thought to the prominence of empirical frameworks that uses masculinity-as-concept to generate positive knowledge about masculine subjects. The paper argues that the metaphoricality of masculinity-as-concept—which operates through similarity between relata—mediates the relationship between the researcher and their object(s) of study. Masculinity-as-concept requires the male body as a touchstone and privileged object thus disallowing the imagination of masculinity sans male body. This essential relationship cannot be erased by plural conceptualisation, hierarchisation, or

progressionism. The paper therefore re-examines masculinity-as-concept to propose a theoretical transition to masculinity as a conceit—an etymological twin of concept—highlighting its capacity to relate disparate objects, phenomena and bodies thus making a decisive break between masculinity and the male body. The paper justifies this assertion by using literary theory and texts from South Asia.

Side of the times: How new dating app categories influence gay, bisexual, and queer men’s identities in Singapore

Self, Philippa Rae. National University of Singapore.

Ho, Michelle H.S. National University of Singapore.

En Ng, Wi. National University of Singapore.

We investigate identity exploration and masculinities of gay, bisexual, and queer (GBQ) men in Singapore through their mobile dating application usage. In particular, we call attention to the growing use of the category side to express sexual preferences beyond anal penetration centered in normative top-bottom binaries. First introduced in 2013, the category has been popularized by the dating application Grindr since 2022. How do GBQ men in Singapore conceptualize and experience being a side? How do broadening understandings of sexual preference inform GBQ men’s negotiations of masculinities? To address these questions, we draw on preliminary data from interviews with 10 GBQ men in Singapore. This paper is part of a larger three-year mixed methods collaborative project that explores digital intimacies, GBQ identities, and sexual health and behaviors. Offering a ground-up construction of the term side, our paper’s significance lies in theorizing transitions in researching queer masculinities, especially in non-Western contexts.

Effeminophobia as/is violence: Lived experiences of men victim-survivors of child sexual abuse

Sharma, Alankaar. University of Wollongong.

Men and boys’ experiences of child sexual abuse (CSA) remain under-examined and under-addressed; little is known about experiences of men and boys from the Global South. Drawing upon phenomenological research based on in-depth qualitative interviews with adult men victim-survivors of CSA in India, in this paper I will

examine the meanings that victim-survivors make of their abuse experiences against a backdrop of heteropatriarchal constructions of masculinity. I will discuss, analyse, and illustrate through ‘found poetry’ (a creative method that uses research participants’ words and phrases to create poems) how effeminophobia—defined as fear and disdain of feminine-identified behaviours, attributes, and presentations among men and boys—is an ingredient and also the product of such meaning making, and eventually works as another form of violence against men and boy survivors following the primary experience of sexual violence.

Jargon and masculinity in Swedish metal industry

Sjögren, Fredrik. Luleå University of Technology.

Workplaces characterized by physical risks and stress often foster gallows humor and jargon. In male-dominated industries, this jargon frequently includes harsh, degrading jokes about gender, sexuality, and race (Andersson, 2012; Iacuone, 2005; Myers, 2005; Baigent, 2001; Collinson, 1988). Participating in this jargon can be seen as part of a counterculture directed upwards in the organizational hierarchy, targeting management, administration, and formal rules (cf. Knudsen, 2009). This creates dynamics of trust and belonging, as well as distrust and exclusion (Ericson, 2011; Myers, 2005; Baigent, 2001; Collinson, 1988). From a class- and gender perspective (Acker, 2006), this study examines the relationship between jargon and masculinity in the Swedish metal industry, based on 64 interviews across eight metal-producing companies. It reveals how jargon simultaneously fosters care, violence, safety, and exclusion, varying across groups, workplaces, and companies in complex and perhaps evolving ways that both reproduce and challenge gender norms.

Reviewing research on men's engagement with AI companions

Skoglund Nyberg, Torbjörn. Malmö University.

This presentation provides an analytical overview of current research and theoretical approaches to men’s interactions with AI companions, focusing on masculinity and vulnerability. While many studies examine power dynamics, such as dominance and control, they often overlook how men experience emotional and

relational needs in these interactions. The contribution of this presentation lies in addressing these gaps. Using masculinity and vulnerability theories as a lens, it examines underexplored aspects of digital intimacy, such as how men navigate attachment, emotional connection and the relational complexities of engaging with AI companions. The artificial nature of AI companions presents a paradox, as existing research suggests that they provide emotional safety while also raising questions about the authenticity of these connections. The presentation underscores the need to expand research to include the nuanced motivations and experiences underlying men’s use of AI companions, providing insights into how AI technologies influence and reflect evolving gender norms.

Trade-offs and “unbearability” in narratives of men’s aging

Smidova, Iva. Masaryk University.

Selected significant transitions in the lives of men as they age and the institutions within which these changes take place form the presentation focus. Structural conditions and individual agency recur in interviews with aging Czech men as “the natural order of things”, legitimizing trade-offs in reviewing their own lives. The analysis is grounded in 80 interviews with men, collected in 2023-24, thematizing intersections of aging, social status, and gender in several social environments. The presentation aims at overarching the distinctive data and theorizing aging masculinities. Critical studies on men and masculinities drive the analytical focus on contrasting privileges and marginalization processes in the narratives of life transitions. A mixture of the “unbearable” trend and trade-offs related to getting older as men is combined here with particular experiences of structural “easiness”. Such as those in keeping autonomy, having choices and resources at hand.

“Does the average bloke even exist anymore?” - Traditional versus caring masculinities in the BBC podcast “How to be a man”

Starck, Kathleen. University of Kaiserslautern-Landau.

Podcasts on masculinity have been a fixture of popular culture for years – often presenting (hetero)normative certainties. In contrast, the 2023 BBC podcast “How to be a Man” professes to

openly explore the confusion surrounding masculinity in the 2020s because “man” has “undergone radical change”, “the rulebook has been ripped apart”.

However, at closer inspection, tensions emerge between the show’s proclaimed openness and guests’ ethnic, professional and sexual diversity on the one hand and an (covert) advocacy of traditional and hypermasculinity on the other. I suggest that this creates two conflicting narratives: first, an ethnically diverse moderate version of what Ging for the manosphere identifies as “dialectical pragmatism” (Demetriou 2001), with “gay positivity functioning ... to unite white, middle-class men, irrespective of sexual orientation, against ... ‘political correctness’” (Ging 2017, 15) and second, exactly this political correctness combined with caring masculinities, functioning as a vehicle for traditional narratives.

Beyond dependency: Elderly refugee men as caregivers in transnational families

Suter, Brigitte. Malmö University.

Mozetič, Katarina. Malmö University

Migration parts families, dispersing members across borders and reshaping intergenerational caring. Research on care within transnational families has extensively documented the pressures placed on women and the middle generation, yet has overlooked the role of elderly men, which are often depicted as passive dependents. This paper disrupts these assumptions by drawing on interviews with elderly refugee men in Sweden in a multi-sited participatory and family-centered research project. We show how these men take on caregiving, both locally and transnationally, and fill critical gaps in national and transnational social protection structures. Yet, their caregiving is fraught with challenges. Health issues, limited language proficiency, and digital illiteracy—exacerbated by restricted access to language courses—complicate their caregiving roles, placing additional strain on younger generations and generating tensions within families.

By bridging scholarship on transnational families, care, and masculinities, we expand understandings of caregiving beyond gendered and generational stereotypes, urging a reconsideration of how care, migration, and welfare intersect in later life.

Vulnerabilities of transitions: Male adolescence, sports and contemporary photography

Söll, Anne. Das Kunstgeschichtliche Institut der Ruhr-Universität Bochum.

Wandhoff, Christian. Das Kunstgeschichtliche Institut der Ruhr-Universität Bochum.

Male adolescences are determined by transitions that are organized by rites de passage of which sport is an essential part. These processes make apparent and “manage” adolescent vulnerability and – we argue – are the subject of documentary photography. If transitions of male adolescence are understood as being in motion, photography fixes these transitions in time making them available visually and affectively tangible. We will explore how contemporary photographers such as Catherine Opie, Rineke Dijkstra or Collier Schorr deal with the issue of adolescent vulnerability when they photograph young sportsmen and what visual language they use to make adolescent transitions visible. The intersections of adolescence and photography have mostly been neglected by sociology and art history. However, photographic imagery, we maintain, explicitly shapes sociological discourses and must be understood as an exploratory and potentially critical position that plays a crucial role when we imagine acts and processes of male adolescent transitions.

Invisibilities and emergences of transmasculinities within academic and public discourses

Tainio, Luca. University of Helsinki.

In my paper I am tracing understandings of transmasculinities through academic research and current public discourses on men and gender.

While Men and Masculinities Studies have broadened normative understandings of masculinities and of men by, for example, including queer masculinities, I would argue trans men as such are still left outside the “proper object” of interest – queer here predominantly comes to denote cisgender gay men. Within the current right-leaning “gender critical” or TERF discourses trans men have also been a sidenote. The recent concerns regarding the increasing number of transmasculine youth, however, has marked the entering of transmasculinities into the sphere of these discourses.

Reading the invisibilities, and emergences, of transmasculinities within Men and Masculinities Studies as well as popular “gender critical” discourses through the lens of Trans Studies, I aim to consider the consequences of those for academic knowledge production as well as mundane understandings of men and masculinities.

Lad’s magazines: The 1990s backlash against feminism

Tolvhed, Helena. Stockholm University.

My paper aims to take a historical approach to contemporary gender relations and the construction of masculinity. It presents an empirical case study of *Slitz*, the leading lads' magazine in Sweden in the 1990s. The analysis highlights the genre's claim to represent a masculinity that is at once supposedly 'natural', and updated/modern. My paper discusses whether and in what ways the magazine can be understood as an expression of a backlash against the achievements of feminism. The magazine is placed in the context of a broader, accelerating individualism and a new post-feminist 1990s landscape (Angela McRobbie) where women's liberation was being interpreted in new ways compared to second-wave feminism.

Racialized masculinities as a transgenerational archive of knowledges, experiences and performances

Torrente, Davide. University of Bayreuth.

Racialized boys and men are vulnerable in a specific way. Their concepts, performances and identities as male* are related to the interweaving of their biographical experiences and power structures and can be reflected as responses to these conditions. Focus of the interview study is the relationship between fathers and their sons who both experience racism within the Rhine-Main-Area. From a hegemonic standpoint, racialized fathers are often seen as absent, violent, and harmful for their children. This fails to recognize that engaged fatherhood can also arise from marginalized positions. However, these relationships are not immune to adultist power dynamics. The presentation is therefore dedicated to the significance of intersectional subordination for their ambiguous relationships and questions how their masculinities can be understood as a transgenerational attempt to survive (post-colonial) conditions of violence and if

pedagogical support of progressive aspects of this coping can contribute to a feminist, childist and antiracist project.

Gender, work, and technology in male dominated organizations

Tosser Franklin, William. Luleå University of Technology.

I will present the report “Gender, work, and technology in male dominated organizations”; a synthesis of previous research on gender and equality within Swedish mining. On the one hand, the report makes visible new knowledge about masculinization processes, subordinate masculinities, and homosocial and exclusionary relationships. The texts provide new knowledge about the gendered worker’s collective’s preservation and restoration of unequal gender patterns through the resistance of new technology, security routines and gender equality. The texts also highlight new knowledge about women’s long, but unknown, history as miners and the previous exclusion of women from mining work and both open and passive resistance from companies, unions, and society against women in the mine. On the other hand, the texts highlight new knowledge about the implementation of “new” technology and the window for change that comes with it, such as new ways of doing gender and new discourses on gender equality.

Trans masculinities in the Western Balkans: Conformity and resistance in navigating hegemonic masculinity on the semi-periphery

Tramošljanin, Luka. University of Antwerp.

Trans men and transmasculine persons have often been marginalized and excluded within masculinity studies. Recently, research on trans masculinities has increased but the perspective of semiperiphery remains absent. This study is situated at the intersection of masculinity studies and trans studies, and addresses the knowledge gap on trans masculinities in the Western Balkans. Drawing on 20 interviews with Western Balkan trans men and transmasculine persons, the study explores how they navigate hegemonic masculinity in the region. Findings suggest that while participants have internalized some standards of hegemonic masculinity from their surroundings, most often they conform to hegemonic masculinity out of safety concerns or under societal pressure. At the same time,

participants resist hegemonic masculinity by adopting transformative masculinity practices, defying gender roles and rejecting the image of the “tough” Balkan masculinity. However, this resistance is only viable in settings where challenging hegemonic masculinity is not jeopardizing participants’ safety.

The clerical closet as a “Glass closet”? A social mechanism revealed by its crisis

Tricou, Josselin. University of Lausanne.

This presentation revisits a socio-historical hypothesis developed in my doctoral research (Tricou, 2019), which sheds new light on male vocational trajectories and the contemporary vocation crisis in Catholicism in France and, more broadly, in Western countries. It explores the concept of the “clerical closet” and its crisis starting in the 1980s—a crisis without which no investigation on this subject would have been possible. However, the persistence of the institutional taboo surrounding clerical homosexuality has made it impossible to conduct a systematic and direct study involving all active clergy and priests. A large-scale, controlled survey on this topic would likely have been blocked at the highest levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Given this limitation, the presentation will draw on reconstructed vocational trajectories of 60 priests and monks of various ages, based on interviews conducted between 2013 and 2016, as well as on the experiences of 116 men and women who initially pursued a vocational path but later abandoned it, using survey data collected in 2016. The analysis will examine the findings and propose both a structural and processual explanation of the likely adaptation of the clergy and its current crisis.

Structurally, the overrepresentation of non-heterosexual individuals within the Catholic clergy can be explained by an implicit sexual bias that operates throughout the vocational journey. This bias turns the institution into a “closet” that is all the more effective in societies where homophobia remains prevalent. Contextually, in Western societies where homosexuality is increasingly normalized, this mechanism is paradoxically intensified by the Church’s leading role in defending the so-called natural order of heterosexual marriage, which is challenged by this normalization. However, the more vehemently the Church asserts its opposition to homosexuality, the more it draws attention to its own internal homophilia. This dynamic

transforms the clerical closet into a “glass closet” (Sedgwick, 1990), making it visible both to insiders and outsiders. This phenomenon is reflected in the success of recent journalistic investigations on the topic (Abbate, 2011; Martel, 2019), which further push the institution into a defensive stance.

Navigating ideals of masculinity in therapeutic culture: Tensions and continuities for young Finnish men

Tähkä, Inka. University of Helsinki.

In my presentation, I will provide an overview of my PhD research focusing on young men’s mental health, ideals of masculinity, and therapeutic culture in Finland. I will draw on the three sub-studies of my research: The first illustrates how young Finnish men feel constrained by ‘traditional’ ideals of masculinity and criticize individualized approaches to mental health. The second one examines how mental health discourses can provoke anti-feminist rhetoric and be used to perpetuate essentialist notions of binary gender differences. The third one analyses how young men’s mental health is discussed in the largest newspaper in Finland during the 21st century, providing a basis for comparison with the first two sub-studies based on young men’s perceptions of public mental health discourses. I will consider the tensions and continuities in idealized masculinities, the possible effects of mental health discourses, and the influence of therapeutic culture shaping understandings of ‘healthy masculinities’.

Masculinity and prime ministerial traits in illiberal regimes: The case of Hungary

Ujlaki, Anna. Eötvös Lóránd University.

How does masculinity influence political legitimacy in illiberal regimes? Our study, based on a representative survey (N = 1500, January 2025), examines key leadership traits in Hungary’s political context. We found a significant gap between what people expect from a prime minister, representing the majority’s interests, and how they perceive Orbán’s leadership in this regard. A similar discrepancy emerged in terms of uncompromisingness, where respondents view Orbán as much more authoritarian than an ideal leader should be. A similar gap exists regarding perceptions of dominance. However, when it comes to governance ability, the survey revealed a preference for illiberal leadership, where the

prime minister is seen as capable of making and imposing decisions independently. Our hypothesis that masculine traits are preferred in illiberal regimes was confirmed, as these traits were favoured even across partisan lines, underscoring the role of dominant, decisive leadership in shaping political legitimacy in Hungary's current political environment.

Beyond schizophrenic gender: A Butlerian-Deleuzian analysis of gender in interviews with prostate cancer patients

Vaakanainen, Sasu. Tampere University.

Men's femininities are often overlooked in critical studies on men and masculinities and those affected by prostate cancer are excluded from feminist theorizing. I'm critical of the contemporary rebranding of femininity and the veiling hegemonic masculinity as "caring" or "hybrid" masculinity. The presentation demonstrates the simultaneous fluidness and rigidity of hegemonic masculinity by expanding it to include femininities without disguising it as a "new" form of masculinity.

The presentation is based on my ongoing PhD research which relies on Butler's theory of gender performativity and Deleuze and Guattari's theory of desiring-production. I aim to develop a new Butlerian-Deleuzian gender theory to dismantle the binary system by showing that hegemonic masculinity is a schizophrenic assemblage that contains its own outside. Empirically the study is based on interviews with prostate cancer patients who have undergone androgen deprivation therapy (ADT). ADT-induced feminizing changes make the complexity of gender visible in patients' discourses.

Young men's transition into fatherhood

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The transition into fatherhood is often a stressful experience for young men. Compared to older fathers, young fathers are more likely to experience vulnerable circumstances, such as socio-economic disadvantage, relationship challenges, and a lack of suitable support. Additionally, stress is heightened because these pregnancies are often unintended, meaning they may be unwelcome, and preparation is lacking. However, young fathers also demonstrate signs of individual and relational resilience. In this study, we explored how vulnerability and resilience

interrelate in young men's transition into fatherhood and how others influence this dynamic. We analyzed data from interviews, focus groups, and a survey conducted with young fathers, their parents, the mothers of their children, and birth care professionals respectively. Our findings highlight the complexity of the relationship between vulnerability and resilience in young fathers and reveal how social and professional support may be insufficient when focusing on one aspect without considering the other.

When men "go solar": Doing masculinity off-grid with solar panels and batteries

Vivi, Matteo. University of Lisbon.

I explore what it means for middle- and upper-class masculinities to "go solar" within one-family homes across suburban North America. Through a multimodal analysis of 131 video consumer stories where men and women explain how, where, and why they "went solar", I present how solar masculinities are intersectionally, what they do within and around the house, and how they construct the decision to transform their home "into their own power plant" as a "no-brainer". To follow how gender power intersects the re-electrification of rich masculinities away from the grid and closer to the sun, I highlight that where gender is done matters - under which roof and behind which four walls: men do not do gender without and regardless of their house, the appliances that inhabit it, and the type of electricity that flows through its living-room spaces. Rather: in sociotechnical synergy with them, amidst climate catastrophes and de-carbonization imperatives.

Soft water: Exploring trans/masculine identity and environmental stewardship through nature writing and memoir

Wagstaff, CJ. Swansea University.

The proposed paper presents *Soft Water*, a developing creative nonfiction monograph which explores intersections between personal narrative, trans/masculine identity, and environmental care and stewardship. Using the structural framework of a walking expedition of the River Neath, the interdisciplinary PhD project blends nature writing and memoir to investigate how "softer" masculinities—characterized by care and relationality—can reinvigorate connections with both the self and the natural world.

Guided by psychogeographic methodology, the practice-based research integrates constraint, photography, poetry, and reflection to produce holistic sensory impressions of the river in each season. Walking interviews with LGBTQIA+ peers, ecologists, and hobbyists provide diverse perspectives on the river as a shared cultural and ecological space, while environmental testing and observation underscore local ecological transition and decline.

This presentation engages with conference themes by interrogating gender and life course transition whilst advocating for caring and environmentally literate masculinities.

Male academic leaders involved in GE work

Wahl, Anna. KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Snickare, Lotta. KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

As part of a research program examining homosocial cultures, we investigated how men engage with and implement gender equality initiatives. This study focused on male academic leaders explicitly assigned responsibility for driving gender equality efforts within their institutions. While all participants expressed support for gender equality and reported satisfaction with their achievements upon completing their assignments, their motivations and approaches varied.

Our findings indicate that leadership providing support and consistent follow-up in clearly defined assignments, as well as structures enabling affirmation from male peers, were critical factors for engagement. However, few leaders demonstrated a deeper understanding of systemic issues underpinning gender inequality or exhibited intrinsic motivation to pursue change. This suggests that, while structural support and external validation can facilitate engagement, a lack of problem awareness and personal commitment may hinder long-term progress in achieving gender equality within academia.

Digital housewives and invisible men: Entrepreneurial femininity and the absence of masculinity

Wall Scherer, Josefine. Stockholm University.

In the past two decades, influencers promoting an ideal of domestic femininity have emerged on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. These digital housewives combine a

nostalgic housewife aesthetic with beauty and consumption tips. Unlike the traditional housewife, they operate within a postfeminist context, where entrepreneurship and social media enable a commercialized femininity that both reproduces and renegotiates female domesticity. The resurgence of the housewife ideal can be understood in relation to nationalist and anti-gender currents, where nostalgic notions of gender, race, nation, and family gain prominence. Through digital ethnography and multimodal analysis, I explore how this ideal is expressed in Instagram practices and aesthetics within a Swedish context. Despite the traditional association of the housewife with a male counterpart, these digital narratives are marked by the absence of men, suggesting a transformation of masculinities in transition within a digital, postfeminist era.

Transitioning to where? Inarticulate masculinities among left-wing men in Britain

Waugh, Chris. Manchester Metropolitan University.

This paper introduces the concept of 'inarticulate masculinities' to explore the emotional and political struggles of men in left-wing social movements in Britain. Drawing on Raymond Williams's 'structures of feeling,' it examines the tensions men face in embodying anti-sexist values while navigating entrenched masculine ideals. Based on qualitative research, the study reveals that men in these movements often understand traditional masculinity and its reproduction in radical spaces but struggle to articulate their transformation in words and actions. These moments of hesitation, often perceived as apathy, are framed as evidence of emerging transformative masculinities. The findings highlight incomplete and hesitant efforts to redefine masculine identities and political practices, offering insights into the broader 'crisis in masculinity' and the dynamics of gender transformation. This paper challenges traditional perspectives on masculinity, emphasising the significance of inarticulation in the ongoing reconfiguration of gender within political movements.

Man up! Open up? Teenage boys' negotiations of social media influencers' representations of mental health

Wickström, Anette. Linköping University.

The question of representations of young masculinities and mental health in social media has

been debated by scholars such as Drioli-Phillips et al. (2022) and Jensen and Hvidtfeldt (2023). They argue that online forums uphold ideals of masculine vitality and competence while also allowing expressions of emotional vulnerability that challenge masculine stereotypes. Inspired by the research approach of ethnography for the Internet (Hine 2015), previously we studied teenage girls' gender-specific interconnections with SMIs. The project demonstrated, among other things, that mental health was transformed into a feminine commodity. Our new project addresses the issue of how discourses on mental health and masculine subjectivities are employed in influencer-generated content and how teenage boys negotiate said content. The aim is to examine emerging ideas of gender, identity and health among teenage boys in relation to popular influencers' representations of mental health and the logic specific to social media.

Managing spoiled Russian identity: Stigma, empire and masculine subject positioning during the Russia-Ukraine war

Yusupova, Marina. Edinburgh Napier University.

This paper examines how the global condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resulting stigma of belonging to an 'aggressor state' shape Russian masculinities. Drawing on 27 biographical interviews with Russian men residing in Russia, the UK, and those who left Russia after the war to settle in various European and Mediterranean countries, I explore how they navigate this stigma. I argue that their performances of masculinity are tied to Russia's performance globally and shift in response to its changing position. I identify three stigma management strategies of 'splitting and blaming', 'disclaiming agency' and 'turning to counter-discourses'. Building on scholarship which theorises stigma as a form of power, I show that stigmatisation and stigma management take place within the context of global coloniality and inter-imperiality. By focusing on masculine subject formation, I reveal how participants' imaginaries of masculinity are deeply intertwined with imaginaries of empire, demonstrating the complex interplay between individual identity and geopolitical dynamics.

What does it mean to be a young man?

Żadkowska, Magdalena. University of Gdansk.

Gender norms determine status, power, and rules of social relations regulating men's lives, often leading to positive and negative consequences related to health and well-being, education, and careers. Young men nowadays question social norms that are disadvantageous to them, such as mandates of emotional control, attention to practices of self-care, using make-up and consulting doctors and therapists. In our research, we investigate possible changes in gender order, considering the perspective of adolescents. Within the framework of the project "EQUAMAN. Masculinity navigator – unpacking the relationship between masculine roles, well-being, and gender equality" we conducted: 7 Focus Group Interviews with over 50 young men (16-22 y.o.). The data collection took place in Poland. We aimed to learn how young men define and negotiate their gender roles in transformation, and which spheres of their life are struggling for change.

The metaphor of the Western frontier and the intersection of masculinity and green transitions

Zaplana, Esther. University of Castilla La Mancha.

During a time of rapid industrialization and environmental change in the nineteenth century, dominant ideals of masculinity in the United States were often tied to conquest, expansion, and mastery over nature, and reflected on broader cultural tensions between exploitation and conservation. Literary works of the era, from transcendentalist writings to frontier narratives, engaged with these tensions, constructing masculinities in relation to either a communion with a virgin wilderness or a troubling exploitation of nature. This paper will look at the metaphor of the Western frontier constructed as a male phenomenon and imagined as a space suited solely for male experience. The analysis will explore contemporary fascination with the rhetoric of (in)vulnerability linked to the conception of the imaginary West as an untamed land for heroic action and domination. Yet, representations also offer a critical reading on the possibility of reimagining masculinity aligned with conservation and an early transformative drive towards green transitions which resonate with the present.

Crafting solar masculinities and femininities during renewable energy transitions in Yemen's conflict

Zhukova, Ekatherina. Karlstad University.

Drawing on document analysis of internationally supported renewable energy projects and on expert interviews with donors, international agencies, and NGOs, I look at how these actors envision solar genders in Yemen during energy transitions. Yemen comes last in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, but its solar infrastructure has reached 50% of rural and 70% of urban households since 2015. I investigate whether women and men benefit from solar energy transition in Yemen, or whether their marginalization from a fossil fuel economy is reproduced during this time. I argue that solar modernities enacted by different actors simultaneously reinforce and challenge local gender norms in Yemen. The paper compares how women and men get access to solar equipment, acquire technical training and skills, and use solar energy in their everyday life. I draw on the scholarly literature on gender and energy, gender and conflict, and energy and conflict.

This version published 2025-06-11.